

### Copyright Notice

The copyright of this thesis vests in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

No portion of the text may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including analogue and digital media, without prior written permission from the University. Extracts of or quotations from this thesis may, however be made in terms of Section 12 and 13 of the South African Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978 (as amended), for non-commercial or educational purposes. Full acknowledgement must be made to the author and the University.

An electronic version of the thesis is available on the Library webpage ([www.wits.ac.za/library](http://www.wits.ac.za/library)) under "Research Resources".

For permission requests, please contact the University Legal office or the Research Office ([www.wits.ac.za](http://www.wits.ac.za)).

# **RECONCEPTUALISING SPACE IN A GRADE 6 CLASSROOM**

by

Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi

A Research Report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of education by combination of coursework and research.

Johannesburg, March 2016

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Education at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for a degree or examination at any other University.

Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi

Sign.....

12<sup>th</sup> day of July in the year 2016

## DEDICATION

To Robert Frost who through poetry caused me to go against the grain and start dreaming as I travel on roads not taken in education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to my supervisor **Dr Kerry Dixon** for all the helpful advice and assistance you provided throughout the research from day one, without your hand all this would not be possible.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude **to Dan Lucas Shabangu**, perhaps the wisest man I know, for allowing me to climb on your broad shoulders and reach new heights. I pray you live to inspire many more.

Lastly, praise and thanksgiving be to the God who makes all things possible under the sun.

## Table of Contents and Figures

Chapter 1 .....	- 8 -
Introduction .....	- 8 -
<b>1.1. Research question.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2. Rationale for the study.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Chapter 2 .....	13
Literature Review .....	13
2.1 Moves toward Rethinking Space .....	13
2.2. Lefebvorean social space framework .....	14
2.3. Michel Foucault's power, knowledge and discourse.....	17
2.3 Applying spatial theory in Educational spaces .....	18
2.4 Space as The Third teacher in Early Childhood Education.....	22
Figure 1 Theoretical Frame for the Research .....	24
Chapter 3 .....	25
Methodology .....	25
Research Design .....	25
Research Sites.....	26
Research Participants.....	27
Table.3.1 : Data Collection.....	29
The pilot study .....	31
Framework for analysis .....	33
Ethics .....	34
Chapter 4.....	36
Reconceptualising the Space.....	36
4. Data Analysis.....	36
Introduction .....	36
Figure 4.1 Grade 6B timetable .....	38
Figure 4.2 image of the spatial layout of the classroom.....	40
Fig 4.3 Gendered Spatial layout of classroom space.....	46
Figure 4.5 Classroom design 3 .....	54
Figure 4.4 Classroom design 1 .....	54
Figure 4.8 classroom design 2 .....	55
Figure 4.6 Classroom design 4 .....	55
Figure 4.7 Classroom design 5 .....	55
Figure 4.9 Thirdspace interrupting the rhythm of first and secondspace .....	59
Chapter 5 .....	60
Lived Experiences in Reconceptualised Space .....	60

Introduction.....	60
Figure 5.1 Original classroom space .....	61
Figure 5.2: Back View of classroom .....	63
Figure 5.3: Front View of classroom.....	63
Figure 5.6.....	68
Rearranged classroom.....	68
Figure 5.4.....	68
Original classroom A.....	68
Figure 5.5.....	68
Original classroom B .....	68
Figure 5.7 U shape seating with two rows forming the U.....	71
Chapter 6 .....	82
Conclusion.....	82
REFERENCE LIST .....	87
APPENDICES .....	91

# Reconceptualising Space in a Grade 6 classroom

---

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Public education was initially meant to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (Robinson, 2009). The aim of schooling in the industrial revolution was to produce learners who conformed, obeyed and possessed the relevant skills needed for an early capitalist economy. Knowledge was transmitted through hierarchical power relations. These ideologies were played out not only in rituals and discourses but also spatially. This is because as we have constituted spaces, space in turn also constitutes us by altering perceptions and behaviors similarly to how a prison space makes one feel a sense of confinement and surveillance (Lefebvre, 1991). In many contexts today schooling remains the same as when it was conceptualised during the Industrial Revolution as the ideologies remain embedded in the physicality of space.

In many South African schools, there is still a strong sense of conformity which is evident in the school uniforms, curriculum, classroom appearance and layouts; the daily rituals like lining up and chorused greetings. The pedagogy used is centered on the powerful teacher transmitting 'facts' to learners who must retain and repeat the facts. Manke (1994) states that chair/desk arrangement can make clear that the only legitimate place to focus one's attention is on the teacher standing at the chalkboard as a hierarchy is established and maintained.

The aims of education have changed with the times and there is a need to produce critical, independent, autonomous learners in a knowledge-based economy. The purpose of education Piaget asserts, is not to conform or encourage repetition but rather encourage students to be creative, innovative and discoverers: people who identify and solve problems (Brainerd & Reyna, 2005).



The ideologies of schooling held during the industrial revolution still inform the physical makeup of many schools in today's society. Originally form would have followed function. In recent times however function has followed form (Wicklund Pigozi & Mau, 2010). Function follows form because the historical arrangements of classroom act as the default setting. Class activities take place in as opposed to the class activities dictating how the class should be arranged. Throughout my undergraduate studies in 2010-14, this is precisely what I found. In the majority of the classroom spaces, I observed a strong conception of schooling reflected in the physicality of space that posits space as 'dead', 'fixed' and 'immobile' (Soja, 1996). The texts used to educate have changed but the spaces in which we do this have remained relatively unchanged. In my Honour's research project titled *Interrogating the Third Teacher*, an attempt to understand how classroom spaces have agency through learner and teacher identity I found that the majority of the classrooms I entered were arranged in the traditional rows facing the blackboard with teacher-fronted pedagogy. This is not just evident in the classrooms but also in policy and literature as the focus is primarily on pedagogy and learning; the teacher/s and the learners and seldom the spatiality.

The study of space, however, provides a more holistic understanding of education as it analyses the physical, cognitive and the imagined realms making explicit how both teachers and learners are constituted by space (Lefebvre, 1991). This research is interested in thinking about what it means to reconceptualise space in a Primary school. I work with one grade 6 class situated in a township<sup>1</sup> in the Eastrand of Gauteng. The research thus places space at the center to better understand the lived experiences of teachers and learners in Eastland Primary as well as how space may help transform educatio

---

<sup>1</sup>'Township' refers to a suburb or city of predominantly black occupation that was formerly designated for black occupation by the apartheid legislation" (Oxford dictionary, 2015).

## 1.1. Research question

### Main research question

In reconceptualising space in a grade 6 English classroom, how does this affect first, second and thirdspace?

### Sub-questions

- ☐ What is the relationship between teachers, learners and space in a government primary school?
- ☐ How do the teacher and learners describe their experiences of transitioning from the current classroom space to reconceptualised classroom spaces?
- ☐ How does a reconceptualisation of classroom space inform learner and teacher identities?
- ☐ What are the challenges and/or benefits the teacher and learners experience when working together to reconceptualise space?

## 1.2. Rationale for the study

The conceptualization of space as central in teaching and learning takes into account how spatiality can hinder or limit educational possibilities (Strong-Wilson & Ellis 2007). Soja (1996) argues that the spatiality continues to be taken for granted or placed in the periphery in social studies. Leander, Phillips, and Taylor, (2010) continue this discussion by further arguing that space has only recently been added to education as a focus. By focusing on space one may be able to study and analyse the impact spatiality has on teaching and learning.

Strong-Wilson and Ellis (2007), Dixon (2007) and Montessori and George, (1964) have reconceptualised space as a key source of educational provision and provide insight into its ability to make educational experiences available. In such a view of learning, classrooms take on a life of their own that can contribute to the child's learning. The classroom ceases to be a setting and is understood as a resource and thus the third teacher.

This reconceptualisation of space as a third teacher is visible mostly in early childhood education (ECD) where teachers work with space. Unfortunately, in the senior phase and the FET band, this reconceptualisation is seldom evident as classrooms still remain in the traditional rows facing the blackboard. Such an arrangement might have its merits in the early writing class (Dixon, 2007), but should not be the sole classroom arrangement. The knock-on effect is then that regardless what objectives are embedded in lessons the classroom remains relatively the same. This can be attributed to the overarching conception of the classroom as a setting and not a tool to attain educational objectives in the senior phase and FET bands. This research then seeks to explore how the third teacher pedagogy in reconceptualising classroom space in a senior phase grade 6 classroom plays out empirically.

Unless teacher training institutions focus on classroom space, teachers will continue to resort to the default settings regardless of their implications. Dixon (2011) argues that unless teacher training institutions focus on classroom space in their curricula teachers may seldom reflect on classroom space in their pedagogy. Without an in-depth focus on space teachers may not utilise the classroom agency provided by space to constitute learners (Lefebvre, 1991) and continue to reflect simplistically where their focus is mainly seating learners in groups or rows. Teacher training institutions ought to encourage thoughtful usage of space from pre-service teachers and in order to do so they need to provide teachers with the tools to enable them to critically assess classroom space. This is so that teachers may know what is possible.

Dixon (2011) presents possibilities of reimagining space and how teacher training institutions need to prepare pre-service teachers to reimagine space. She does not however, present empirical data looking at the consequences of reimagining space and what different possibilities look like. To work with teacher training institutions and education we need this empirical data to progress. The apparent shortage of empirical work exploring the impact space has on the classroom and in schools means additional research is needed to understand what happens when spaces are reconceptualised in classrooms. This research thus aims to address this gap by

exploring what is possible when teachers and learners collaboratively reconceptualise and redesign classroom spaces.

### **Outline of chapters**

The six chapters in the research report are structured in the following way: chapter two is the literature review. The third chapter discusses the methodology used in the research and the fourth and fifth chapters present the research findings. The last chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

In this chapter I argue how a shift has taken place in how space has been studied. This is followed by an explanation of the two analytical lenses used in this study: Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theory of space and Michel Foucault's work on discourse, knowledge and power. This is followed by the literature that applies to both theories in and outside of South Africa by Christie (2013), Sheehy (2009) and Dixon (2007). Lastly I show how space is central in early childhood education classrooms.

#### 2.1 Moves toward Rethinking Space

In the past the prevailing conceptualisation of space has resulted in placing space in the periphery and not central in human life (Soja, 1996). Foucault (1977), Lefebvre (1991), Thrift (2006) and Christie (2013) critique the study of space as fragmented which is evident in the differing studies of space located in disciplines such as geography and architecture which provide 'shards of knowledge' that partially represent everyday life (Christie, 2013).

These 'shards of knowledge' oversimplify space and often fail to show the relationship that exists: where one space is created and creates other social spaces in a manner where separating each space from the other is not possible. Added to this limited and distorted view of space is research through Marxist and critical realist lenses that places the emphasis on the 'things' in space and little or no emphasis on the space they exist in. There is however a move towards "placing space at the centre of the analyses" (Christie, 2013, p.776).

While many have gone into great depths in analysing space in terms of the social relations embedded in it, two individuals stand out. Henri Lefebvre presents a triad of social space: *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived* as well as Michel Foucault (1977; 1978), who presents a trialectic of *space*, *knowledge* and *power*.

## 2.2. Lefebvorean social space framework

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century several scholars started thinking about the spatiality of human life and in so doing have helped open up the historical and tightly interwoven sociological imagination to a deeper appreciation for the spatiality of life (Soja, 1996). This shift is necessary as we realise that “we are, and have always been, intrinsically spatial beings, active participants in the social construction of our embracing spacialities” (Soja, 1996, p.1).

In *The Production of space* Lefebvre (1991 p. 101) defines space as an  
encounter, assembly, simultaneity . . . [of] everything that there is *in space*, everything that is produced either by nature or by society, either through their co-operation or through their conflicts. Everything: living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols.

In doing this Lefebvre sets out to establish a united theory of space in the midst of all the fragmented abstractions of space such as geographic/ethnographic/demographic spaces. This united theory allows us to unpack the complex layers of classrooms focusing on how each layer relates to the other and in essence creates one space. This enables and exposes existing social relations and activities of space that relate to real life. He thus seeks to “analyse space in terms of the social relations embedded in it rather than the “things” within it or space emptied of things” (Christie, 2013, p.776). The strength of such a theory allows us to see the interrelatedness of spaces and how one space can create another or conflict with another space. A unified theory of space is set in place that does not present space as united, or in agreement with each other. The Lefebvorean framework presents space in three realms that in collaboration with one another make up social space: perceived space, conceived space and lived space also termed by Soja (1996) ‘firstspace’, ‘secondspace’ and ‘thirdspace’ respectively. According to Lefebvre these three spaces are continuously constructing and deconstructing each other.

Perceived space (firstspace) is made up of the practices that are perceived as reality. According to Soja (cited in Sheehy, 2009, p. 13) “firstspace is the space of social practice, and it produces relationships to practice, people, things and the place

of practice.” This refers to what is said to be reality. In a classroom setup this could refer to the ‘physical’ routines and rituals like the lining up, the rehearsed greetings and the issuing of homework and it’s marking. They also create relationships between people, things and practices as the learners do the homework and the teachers do the marking and likewise the learners greet the teachers and the teachers respond, and, similarly the learners line-up facing the teacher who is usually in front. These firstspace events made up of everyday social practices are naturalised by the secondspace so that they appear normal.

Conceived space or secondspace operates dialectically with the perceived space by codifying and rationalising the perceived space so that it is given meanings and normalised. The collaboration of secondspace with firstspace naturalises the firstspace by creating, according to Allen (1999), a rational narrative cover story that people apply to firstspace. This is done through the use of symbolism where teacher practices might be justified because s/he is the knowledge carrier, the informed party, the ‘older’ person or the one who is said to have authority and power. This justifies why she marks, selects content and sits on a different chair at times and determines the learners’ progression.

Without the secondspace justification of firstspace practices the daily happenings in society would be simply irrational and perhaps unacceptable. It is the second space knowledge that explains why a doctor can dictate to a patient to undress to examine the body or even dictate what a patient should eat (Lefebvre, 1991). Unlike firstspace, secondspace ideologies cannot be seen as they rest in the consciousness of society and when they are questioned or challenged as opposed to being embraced, the result maybe friction amongst members and institutions of society.

Thirdspace/ lived space, is the imaginative feeling in space that interrupts the ‘rationality’ of firstspace and secondspace because it is, unlike secondspace, not appropriate and conscious. This interruption in education takes place when what is considered good is challenged by learners/ teachers. Learners may sleep in class or question the teacher’s authority and interrupt the rhythm in class. During my

observations a learner questioned the pedagogy of a teacher and refused to co-operate. These actions go against the second space rationality.

Thirdspace relates to Foucault's (2000) deviation heterotopias as it deals with instances that likewise disturb or interrupt the rhythm of what is considered 'normal' social life, like psychiatric hospitals and prisons. Thirdspace is powerful in that it makes possible what might have been rationally deemed improbable by secondspace as it constantly asks 'what if'? (Schmid, 2008). The challenge however is that thirdspace is unstable and not systematic and so may present different results to the same situation. In many cases however, thirdspace becomes rationalised and routine and feeds into first and second space.

By way of example in a school with hierarchical teacher-student relations, learners are not permitted to leave the classroom abruptly. In the event that a learner with a bladder problem constantly runs out of the class to the nearest restroom repeatedly the school may begin to rationalise such behaviour as legitimate. The school then may ritualise the occurrence by asking learners to get notes from doctors and or parents if they have any similar condition. Here we see how a thirdspace event that interrupted the rhythm of a normal school day has become ritualised into a firstspace occurrence. This is done in many cases to restore rhythm in the school day.

While space is complex and abstract the work of Lefebvre enables one to study space as his work presents space as layered and shows how the layers relate to each other. It also places emphasis on the reactions within space that make up space. This framework guides the approach I take in analysing classroom space. By showing how the production of space is hyper-complex and inseparable from power Lefebvre's theory has been found to work well with Michel Foucault's work that conceptualises space, power and knowledge. This has resulted in several Lefebvrian analyses of space working with Foucauldian ideology in the works of Christie (2013), Sheehy (2009), and Soja (1996).



### 2.3. Michel Foucault's power, knowledge and discourse

Foucault's work informs this research, particularly his notion that power is evident in both knowledge and discourse. Foucault sees power as going beyond the political into everyday life as it comes from everywhere and embraces everything including the inanimate objects. This conception of power is not to be thought of as only negative and repressive but also productive. It can be used differently by different structures and individuals and is able to combine forming new and complex dynamics.(Gaventa, 2003).

Likewise power is not possessed but rather it circulates and is diffused amongst all people (Foucault, 1977) and so we can resist the binary labelling of teachers as powerful and learners as powerless. This power is evident in action by the learners lifting their hands in response to an answer or placing earphones in their ears to purposefully ignore the teacher.

In essence power is the dynamic control or lack of control between discourses and subjects constituted by discourse. Power can thus be exercised within discourse in ways that constitute and govern individual subject. Foucault draws strong links to power and knowledge and shows how both operate with in discourse. Historically some discourses create and shape meaning systems that carry a 'truth' status that then dominates how individuals and society define themselves and the world. These 'truth' discourses un/knowingly marginalise other discourses that are beneficial because they provide platforms that critique and resists the so called 'truth' discourse (Weedon, 1987).

Foucault's work enables me to study classroom space with a focus on the power relations that exist that are evident in discourse and knowledge. This is because while discourse is constructed socially (Weedon, 1987), it nonetheless has power over how individuals think and behave. Discourse can imprison learners' and teachers' behaviour and thought. Discourse can also create or transform activities by reimagining rituals or institutional configurations and therefore create new social relations. An example is when schools first adopted a learner-centred approach to education it changed social relations as learners now had more say. Foucault's work

thus helps read not just the actions in the class but how discourses exclude or include individuals.

This research conceptualises discourse as the ways of constituting knowledge, social practices, forms of subjectivity and knowledge/power relations. In reconceptualising space the research studies how discourse both prior to and after the reconceptualisation constitutes the un/conscious mind and emotions of the participants. The reconceptualisation of space then provides participants with another the site to critique and resists the 'truth' status discourse apparent in the space and other discourses that governs both the social practices and subjects in the space (Weedon, 1987).

To do this the classroom as well as the broader schooling context acts as what Foucault calls a discourse field (Weedon, 1987): a space that contains a number of contradictory and competing discourses with varying degrees of knowledge/power to provide meaning. Some discourses in the discourse field will constrain new knowledge and difference whilst others will enable new knowledge and difference. By closely looking at discourse knowledge and power I want to understand how the discourses are maintained, who maintains them and who this empowers and disempowers. Foucault's work enables the researcher to explore these questions.

## **2.3 Applying spatial theory in Educational spaces**

### **2.3.1. Margaret Sheehy**

In *Place stories* Margaret Sheehy (2009) uses both Lefebvre's theory of space and Foucault's spatial ordering of discourse to explore time, space and literacy in two distinct classrooms. In this analysis of the classrooms Sheehy uses Lefebvre's thirdspace/lived space to interrupt the time/space rhythm (by rhythm she refers to "everyone knowing what to do and doing it right" (2009, p.83) in the classroom, paying special attention to how individual student engagements (third space) made varying impacts on other learners and also noticing how the planned (second space) was at times resisted (thirdspace).

In her work Sheehy pays attention to the emerging patterns such as “tensions with roles and new texts” (2009, p.72 ) where learners resisted completely or partially when they were expected to work on the project with Margaret Sheehy they did not feel she had authority to tell the learners what to do because she was not their teacher. They also resisted because the texts they were required to work with were new to the learners. The application of thirdspace thus foregrounds how learners and/or teachers may resist power through discourse and/or action.

The focus on Sheehy’s work is placed on the cause of the resistance and not the resistance itself. In this research the focus is also on why learners and teacher resist classroom design and not just on how the resistance manifests itself. Similarly when there is no resistance I consider why there is cooperation.

In Sheehy’s work learners also, in working within thirdspace, focused on claiming space by changing classroom practices. What makes this difficult is that class practices are often intertwined with the relations in school discourses. Sheehy notes that change was thus structurally resisted as the school discourse sought to reinforce the existing patterns. This resulted in interrupting the imagined practice from being ritualised into a firstspace practice. Foucault’s (1977) work, and following Sheehy’s research are useful in seeing how discourse and the physical structures in schools may work in resisting or promoting the redesign of the classroom space. Holistically, *Place Stories* shows the hyper-complexity of space by initially explaining each space in the trialectic individually and then showing how they collaboratively operate together as they construct and deconstruct each other. This is the approach I use in reading classroom space as I foregrounding firstspace and then going on to look at secondspace and thirdspace relations.

### 2.3.2. Pam Christie

In South Africa, Christie (2012) uses Lefebvorean rhythmanalysis cited in Lefebvre (2014) to generate a theoretical and methodological framework to investigate the relationship between space, place and social justice in education. *In Space, Place, and Social Justice: Developing a Rhythmanalysis of Education in South Africa* Christie argues that a Lefebvorean rhythmanalysis “enables a study of multiple logics and different scales—unitary but not unified—in understanding the production of

inequalities in education, and suggesting possibilities for working for change”(1991,p.784) .

By using this framework Christie (2012) is able to show how the generalizations of policies relate to differing schools. By taking account of the past this framework is able to identify the continuing inequalities rooted in the geographical location of the student which has rarely changed during apartheid and post-apartheid. These inequalities are masked by large scale representations like provincial statistics but with the detailed analyses they are revealed and can now be addressed (Christie, 2012). Schooling from national policy level needs to take these differences into account when in the secondspace planning of the educational experiences they seek to provide learners in different contexts. By taking context into account this will help in addressing diverse needs and the need to redress inequalities by understanding how inequalities are spatially produced (Christie, 2012).

Christie shows how school classrooms are linked to the spaces they are situated in. This is useful for my research, as she, unlike Sheehy, does not focus inside the classroom space but rather outside the space and in so doing contextualises classrooms.

While Basil Bernstein (1971) cited in Christie (2013) may be correct in asserting that “schools cannot compensate for society” they still however prepare the child to function in society and the broader world as they socialise the child (Dixon, 2011). Schools therefore do more than just impart knowledge relating to the various disciplines but more correctly try to impart a way of being that directs body (physically) and the mind. This is not just done by teachers and the knowledge but also space and how it is both conceptualised and arranged and relates to the greater context.

Christie’s work goes outside the classroom and the school and explores how the macro influences and relates to the micro. This is necessary because while I am focusing on a particular classroom space I still seek to analyse the classroom in relation to the school as a whole and the broader township community it forms part of. This research also situates what is happening in the school with the community it

is in. Without such a lens the township school that is being redesigned would be studied in isolation without considering the happenings and norms of the township and the times.

### 3.1. Kerryn Dixon

Added to this is the work of Kerryn Dixon (2011) in *Literacy, Power and the Schooled Body*. In this research a strong link is made between the body, literacy, power and the school in analysing five classrooms from Southside Primary School and Acacia Preschool.

Similar to Christie's work, Dixon provides an in-depth analysis of the context the schools finds themselves in externally from the community and history and the internal ethos of the school. Dixon, although primarily using Foucault's work, explores the possibilities and constraints caused by the distribution of space in the various classrooms that effect pedagogy. Dixon (2011) finds that many discipline problems faced in the classes could have been avoided by an informed and reflective control of classroom space. She further classifies constraints faced by teachers as either practical constraints or those "affected by the teachers' knowledge and beliefs" (Dixon, 2011, p.31).

The conception of space as peripheral that I have witnessed in my teacher training and honours research project is also noticed by Dixon (2011) in pre-service teachers who tend to rely on how they were taught in their schooling career. While several concepts are taught to the pre-service students these beliefs and knowledge are not internalised as they are not given sufficient time. Unfortunately once they leave the teacher training institutions it becomes hard to apply these concepts because the disciplinary discourse used, observable practices of other teachers, the default organisation of classroom space and a governmental prescriptive curriculum make it difficult to reconceptualise space. For this reason the change in conceptualization should be spear-headed by teacher- educators because they stand between knowledge and practice and thus need to promote and display reflection upon their own practices.

The jump from pre-primary to primary school results in several changes in the use of space as space to play is reduced or removed and space to move is also reduced, as the child now in grade three spends 5/5.5 hours at their desk while, in grade 00 and 0 they spent 1.5/4.5 and 1/5 respectively. This move from 26% to 91% of the time spent around their desk (usually sitting) in Dixon's research needs to be critiqued as these children need not be so sedentary for two reasons.

Firstly, the growing concern about childhood obesity cannot be ignored in the spaces where learners spend a large amount of their time. Secondly, movement can and should be implemented in the following grades because organising classroom space should be based on functions so that functional sites are set-up. Sites can serve for multiple functions including working outdoors when the function is best met there (Dixon, 2011).

I have ended with Dixon's work as she begins the focus not only on arranging space as a teaching tool but the implications for pedagogy, learning and the learners' physical bodies. This research seeks not only to analyse classroom space but also to change it by defusing the power relations and giving all members a voice, something Dixon does well working with Foucault's notion of power. Her work also helps guide and strengthen this research by helping identify how the teacher's knowledge and beliefs need to be understood/critiqued as this relates to how space is conceptualised and so reconceptualising space, more than moving and changing classroom materials, is a cognitive undertaking. Hence more than observing teaching this research works with the teachers and learners conceptions of space. The work of Dixon (2011) starts the move to using space as a tool to solve problems apparent in education. Her work speaks to the work done in Reggio Emilia which places importance on space in teaching and learning.

## **2.4 Space as The Third teacher in Early Childhood Education**

The Reggio Emilia Approach, named after the city it began in in Italy, is a philosophy in education common in preschool and primary education that was developed after World War II. This approach views the child as strong, capable and resilient: a child who through curiosity and wonder seeks to understand the world. The Reggio Emilia

classroom approach thus creates a context for learning that is directed by the learners' curiosity and context to channel learning (Strong-Wilson & Ellis 2007). Here the classroom space is viewed as the *third* teacher because in Reggio Emilia municipal preschool classrooms there are usually two teachers in the classroom or in other places where there is one teacher in the classroom the parents function as the second teacher. Strong-Wilson and Ellis (2007) state that in paying attention to how space is arranged Reggio Emilia's third teacher approach has re-conceptualised space as a key source of educational provision and insight in its ability to make other educational experiences available. This requires a focus on how the learners view space to create meaning during learning.

In the Reggio Emilia system the environment is the third teacher. By environment we include the items in the classroom and the arrangement thereof. Reggio thus focuses on how teachers can observe and work with how space 'speaks' and encourages interaction through curiosity brought about by change in the arrangement or items in the class causing a provocation. "Because children's experiences are limited by the places they inhabit, it is vitally important that we pay attention to those places" (Strong-Wilson & Ellis 2007 p.43) .The Reggio Emilia approach thus views inanimate objects such as the classroom as able to impart knowledge or assist in teaching.

This reconceptualisation however of classroom space in the Reggio Emilia classroom focuses mostly on early childhood development and the foundation phase. This research attempts to bring this approach into a township senior phase classroom and contrast and compare the results both before and after, using a Lefebvrian framework of analysis focusing on how learners, teachers collaboratively design and live in a space that conceptualised as a teacher.

The figure below illustrates how the theoretical frame helps synthesise a tool to make sense of space in Eastland Primary's<sup>2</sup> grade 6 English class. We are now with the frame provided above able to explore how social space, which incorporates

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Eastland Primary' is a pseudonym as the actual school name has not been used.

discourse and power, function in teaching and learning in Eastland Primary as well as the possibilities available (see Figure 1).

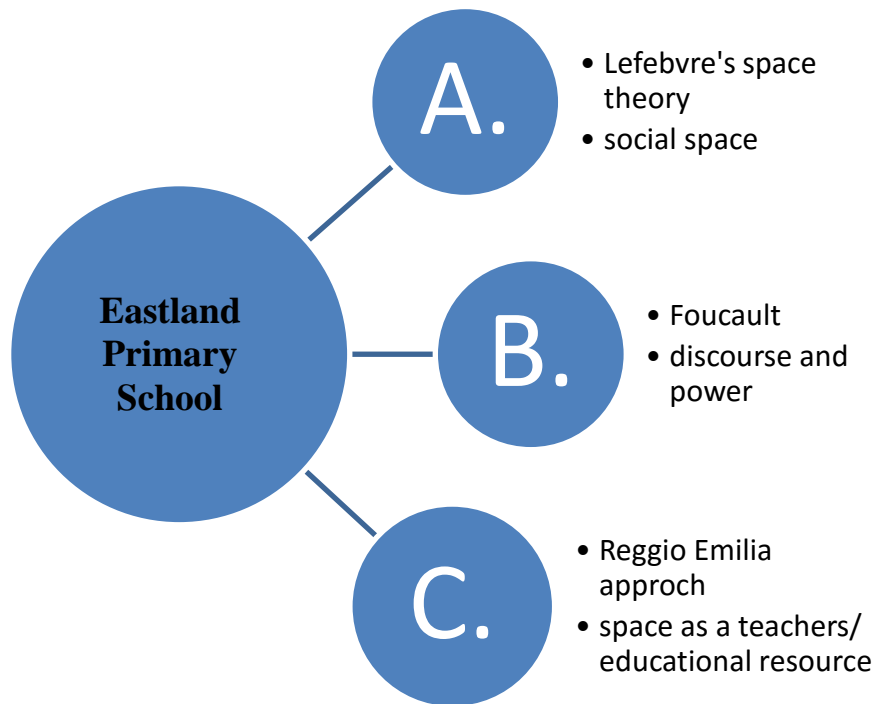


Figure 1 Theoretical Frame for the Research



## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This chapter discusses the qualitative methodology used in the research report. I start by discussing why a qualitative case study is best suited for this report. This is then followed by an outline of the steps carried out to collect the data at the selected site.

### Research Design

The research design in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research focuses on the subjective experiences, meanings and processes of the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Data is analysed descriptively through the lens the researcher brings to bear on the data collected in a natural setting. This design is appropriate for my research as I am studying how learners and teachers experience a complex concept 'space' in a grade 6 classroom.

This qualitative research uses a case study research design. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation at a particular time. It is helpful in narrowing down a broad field into a researchable topic and testing theoretical models by applying them to real world situations (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The case I research is the collaborative reconceptualisation of a classroom space. I narrow the study to focus on one grade 6 classroom in Eastland Primary so that the topic is both researchable and I am able to work with rich in-depth data focusing in on the quality of responses and not the quantity. An apparent challenge in the research design is how case studies are said to be time consuming with findings that demonstrate depth of information and very little breadth.

The generalisability of the findings is limited as I have worked with the subjective experiences of one group of participants in a particular context. The patterns that emerge however may prove helpful in other contexts. This is because we are exploring three resources that are available in all schooling contexts: space, teachers and learners. The insights are thus likely to apply in other contexts and/or

ask new questions that may progress both education and research that centers spatiality and collaboration amongst teacher and learner relations.

### Research Sites

I have selected a co-educational government school situated in a township towards the east of Gauteng. The majority of the children who attend Eastland Primary come from the neighboring townships in and around the east of Gauteng. The large majority of the learners speak isiZulu at home. Eastland Primary offers grades R to seven to a total +/- 1200 learners coming from a variety of homes many of which have no source of income save the governmental grants. Eastland Primary is a non-fee paying schools. The school is relatively well resourced although there is a shortage of classrooms with class sizes ranging from thirty to fifty learners. To overcome this challenge in Eastland Primary the teachers travel from class to class. The language of learning and teaching in Eastland Primary is English but the staff code-switches to isiZulu regularly as the learners are more fluent in isiZulu. This resulted in many interactions with the learners and staff members being translated from isiZulu to English as communication in many cases was efficient in isiZulu.

I have selected this school because of convenience. It is easier for me to travel to the school as I am familiar with the location and reside near the school. A large amount of research takes place in private schools and the 'former model c schools' and I have selected Eastland Primary because it is a true representation of schooling for many children. The findings may thus be beneficial to a large part of South Africa.

The class the research is focused on is grade 6B. I have worked with grade 6 learners for three reasons. Firstly there is less pressure on the grade 6 learners as opposed to the grade seven learners. Secondly, having worked with grade 6 learners before, I have found them to provide interesting responses in my honours research project. Their responses were both genuine and intelligible as they appeared to enjoy open ended discussions and spoke their minds freely. Thirdly, the concept of the third teacher, where space is utilised as a resource, is evident in the ECD (early childhood development) classes and not the senior phase. I have therefore purposefully selected a grade in the middle of the senior phase to explore how the reconceptualisation of space may play out in the senior phase. 6B was selected by

the English teacher I worked with. She selected this class because she teaches this class English and she felt this class is very interactive.

The research is structured around English as a subject. English is weakly classified as there is little boundary maintenance between content (Bernstein, 1986 p. 49). This makes working with space in the English class fluid as the subject content, having an integrated code, is less specialised and thus potentially gives learners more voice.

### Research Participants

The research consists of two primary groups of participants, teachers and learners. Mrs Ziba<sup>3</sup> is the homeroom teacher and the LO (Life Orientation) teacher for the 6B class. This means she meets with the class daily in the mornings. She is thus a participant because the classroom 'belongs' to her as it is her homeroom class. I obtained consent from her to conduct the research as the research entailed redesigning her classroom.

Mrs Dlamini<sup>4</sup> is the English teacher who teaches English as the first additional language to all grade 6s. She has been teaching for fourteen years and has spent ten of those years teaching English at Eastland Primary. She is central to the research as I observe and work with her pedagogy and space.

Occasionally Mrs Dlamini and I got into dialogue on how she could utilise the space/relations provided for teaching and/or ask why she had decided to arrange the class a particular way. At no point, however, did I teach the learners. My role in teaching and learning was simply to observe.

Mrs Mnguni<sup>5</sup> is a teacher I interviewed at the end of the research because she adopted the seating arrangement 6B implemented in their redesign. Unlike Mrs Ziba and Mrs Dlamini my interview with Mrs Mnguni was initially unplanned as is common with case studies. It should be noted that all grade 6 teachers and the principal

---

<sup>3</sup> Mrs Ziba is a pseudonym and the participants name has not been used.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Dlamini is a pseudonym and the participants name has not been used.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs Mnguni is a pseudonym and the participants name has not been used

consented to the research as the classroom is shared by all grade 6 teachers who teach 6B.

The second group of participants is the grade 6 learners of 6B. There are 31 grade 6 learners in 6B, fourteen boys and seventeen girls. All the learners are black citizens of South Africa. In several instances the learners preferred to express themselves in isiZulu during the interviews and during teaching and learning particularly when they could not best express themselves in English.

## 1.2. Data Collection Instruments

The research project makes use of three data collection instruments: community of enquiry (COEs), observations and the interviews. The schedules and protocols are provided in the appendix (see appendix L).

### Community of enquiry

The research project makes use of four community of enquires to obtain data from participants. A community of enquiry is a pedagogy that positions its participants as able meaning-makers and problem-posers it strongly aligns with the view this research has on what a learner/teacher is: an able problem solver (Haynes & Murriss, 2013). In the COE the members are seated in a circle so that they can all see each other as they engage in a democratic discussion to vocalise their experiences and insight (Haynes & Murriss, 2013).

The purpose of the first COE was to understand how learners conceptualise a classroom and to see how learners feel about their current classroom space and redesigning the classroom. In the second COE the purpose was to redesign a classroom. Learners then designed and presented their imagined classroom to their peers. The learners voted for their favourite design for the class to implement. The third COE focused on how learners experienced both redesigning the classroom space and learning in the redesigned classroom as opposed to the initial classroom space. In the last COE the purpose was to examine, after a three month period, whether learners and teachers had retained the collaborative changes and the consequences of doing so. The data from the all the COEs was tape recorded and transcribed.

## Observation

In the first two weeks of the research project I was a participant observer of teaching and learning as I sat in the classroom space. The purpose of the observations was to see how space is constructed and utilised in the English space prior to the redesign. Likewise, after the redesign, I similarly observed teaching and learning in the redesigned space.

The data collected from the observations was captured through photographic images, video recordings and field notes all of which had received ethical clearance prior to the data collection.

## Interview

To understand the experiences of the teacher the research makes use of two interviews. Firstly I interview the English teacher Mrs Dlamini to gain insight about entire research project as she presents a teacher's perspective. The second interview is with Mrs Mnguni because she has adopted the seating arrangement selected by 6B. The purpose of the interview is then to understand why the arrangement found favour in her eyes and the effects the arrangement has had on teaching and learning.

The data from the interview was recorded and then later transcribed. Below is a tabulation of the data collection (see table 3.1).

Table.3.1 : Data Collection			
<u>Duration</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Data collected</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
1. First and second week Date: 28/9-2/10/15	Teacher & Learner & Researcher	Observation notes, images and video recordings of teaching and learning as well as a tape recording of the first COE	To get the feel of the school and class and blend into the classroom environment.

2. Last day of the second week Date: 27/10/15	Teacher & Learner & Researcher	Tape recordings of participant responses during first COE.  Photographs of the sketches learners presented in the second COE.	Plan next week's classroom arrangement
3. Third week (during school holidays Monday – Thursday the 5th-8th October 2015)	Professional painters, learners, teacher and researcher, principal and deputy principal	<u>Creating the imagined class</u>  Data collected: images and sketches of the classroom as well as observation notes.	This stage although guided by the researcher was directed by the learners to have them redesign the space.
4. Week four, five and six Date:12-27/10/15	Teacher & Learner & Researcher	Observation notes, images and video recordings of teaching and learning as well as a tape recording of the third COE.	To see how the learners/teachers work in space (Pedagogy and learning)
5. Last day of week six Date 27/10/15	Teacher & Learner & Researcher	Tape recordings of participant responses during third COE.  A Tape recording of the interview with Mrs Dlamini	Evaluating classroom experiences (experimental week 1 and 2 as well as the classroom) and comparing them to the previous week

6. Follow-up Date: 8/2/16	Teacher, learners and researcher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A transcript of the Interview Mrs. Mnguni</li> <li>2. A tape recording of the fourth COE.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To find out how the research project influenced the school</li> <li>2. How the seating arrangement played out in other classrooms</li> <li>3. Following up on the on 2015 6B, the other grade 2015 grade 6's who did not participate and the new 6B in the redesigned space.</li> </ol>
Duration of data collection $\pm$ 6weeks			

### The pilot study

Prior to the data collection a COE was piloted with 10 learners in grades 6 and seven in the same school on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September. The findings from the COE resulted in minor changes. Initially, the researcher facilitated the COE but did not ask learners to elaborate on their answers. This was problematic as it resulted in surface answers. To give the researcher room to extract depth from the answers the researcher started asking learners, where necessary, to justify their answers and encouraged learners to participate and voice out conflicting views. This was done when peers did not question each other's opinions.

#### Week one and two: 28/9/15- 2/10/15

The first two weeks the following took place: 1) classroom observation 2) the community of enquiry and 3) the group presentations based on the COE.

#### Observing teaching and learning

I spent the first week in 6B to ensure participants adapted to having a researcher in their space. During breaks, I would move around the school to get a sense of the

overall feel of the school's culture and norms. The purpose of the two weeks was to see how space was used and organised within the school.

The first COE took place at the end of the two weeks, the teacher could not be present in the initial COE. The consequences of her absence were that the COE lacked her voice in the democratic discussion. The learners, unlike the other COE's, felt an increased sense of freedom to comment on what they did not like in the classroom. The teachers was however consulted later to incorporate her views. The COE was also to encourage dialogue from teachers and learners and this was slightly hindered.

In the second COE learners then formed five groups of 5/6 after the break and after being exposed to images of different classrooms to help inspire and encourage learners' creativity, learners proceeded to sketch the ideal classroom they would like to be taught in. The groups then selected two people to present their designed classroom to the class to justify why they wanted the classroom they proposed. The group then answered three questions from peers. Learners stood in pairs with their sketch and presented them to the class and this was done to reduce nervousness from learners as opposed to standing alone without a prompt.

Once this was done by all six groups the class voted for the best classroom. The classroom was then reworked to incorporate other suggestions and to obtain a workable and more realistic plan taking into account the time, finances available and the limitations and desires presented by the principal, English teacher and homeroom teacher.

### Week Three: redesigning the classroom 5-8/10/15

The learners redesigned the classroom space for four days in the October holiday from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>. Each day had specific tasks allocated, working towards redesigning the classroom space. The entire research was self-funded by the researcher. The learners and teachers as well as the school did not provide funds.



Week four, five and six: 12-27/10/15

Observation, video recording and the restructuring of the classroom space

In the fourth, fifth and sixth week I continued to make observation notes and video recordings of teaching and learning in the new classroom space. Data was collected through observations, but I also had informal conversations with the teachers and learners about how this redesign has affected pedagogy.

Week six: COE3 and interviews: 27/10/15

On the last day I interviewed Mrs Dlamini and I had the third COE. This was to get the participants' perspective of the consequences of the changes. Having noticed that the teacher unknowingly hindered some learners from participating, the third COE had two stages: one with the teacher and one without. The teacher hindered the discussions by constantly interrupting learners' responses during the COE to provide correction and her judgments (COE3, 2015). As a result learner participation in the COE dropped in comparison to the initial COE without the teacher as I, the researcher, welcomed controversial responses and differing views.

The follow-up interview and COE: 8/2/15

The following year, approximately 3 months later, on the eighth of February 2016, I went back to Eastland Primary to make observations and interview a teacher and have the fourth COE with the grade seven classes and one grade 6 class. On the same day I had the fourth COE with the three grade seven classes separately and interviewed Mrs Mnguni. This is because the former grade 6B had been split into three different grade seven classes with the other grade 6 learners. Lastly, I conducted a COE with the new 6B who use the redesigned classroom to gain insight into their experiences.

### **Framework for analysis**

Data analysis is carried out using a naturalist, interpretive approach where the outcome is not absolute truth but understanding the subjective standpoint of the teachers and the learners. The research allows the reader and the researcher to share the frame of reference in order to understand the individual's experience and interpretation of the classroom space. Whilst the learners' views may not be realistic

and truthful or positivist proof the consequences thereof are and can thus help us gain an understanding of their world (Cohen, Manion, Morrison 2007).

This framework for analysis prevents me from generalizing but rather focuses on examining situations through the eyes of participants. I use a Lefebvrian and a Foucaudian framework to analyse my data. I work with firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace collectively looking at how they construct and deconstruct each other. The data analysis is guided by the research questions:

1. What is the relationship between teachers, learners and space in a government primary school?
2. How do teachers and learners describe their experiences of transitioning from the current classroom space to reconceptualised classroom spaces?
3. How does a reconceptualisation of classroom space inform learner and teacher identities?
4. What are the challenges and/or benefits teachers and learners experience when working together to reconceptualise space?

I analysed the data firstly by classifying it into three sections: How the old classroom space was, how learners and teachers changed the space and lastly, how the new classroom looked themes: 1) how time governs the daily events in the school and how what is valued is given more time, how relations foreground gender, 2) how a sense of belonging is evident and likewise a sense of alienation and lastly 3) how the contextual norms in the township manifest in the classroom space resulting in outcries about safety". Using Lefebvre and Foucault's work as a lens to explain and make sense of the patterns and themes paying careful attention to how we constitute space and how space constitutes us (Lefebvre, 1991).

## Ethics

There are ethical issues the researcher needs to consider when conducting interviews, observations and running community of enquiries. I received clearance from the ethics committee and consent from all participants involved in the research. In dealing with the learners I have also received the consent forms from parents/guardians. In the beginning of all interviews and COEs participants were informed of

their right to withdraw at any point of the research (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

The participants and the researcher agreed to uphold confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research by keeping secret all happenings in the research and to utilise pseudonyms to avoid exposing the real identity of any person or school involved in the research. Likewise, the data will also be stored safely in a locker at the researcher's house and will only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor and after 4 years deleted.

## Chapter 4

### Reconceptualising the Space

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### Introduction

The research project analyses the ways in which space functions and is reconstituted in a grade 6 English classroom. In order to understand the operation of space, the first part of the chapter analyses the classroom space before the intervention. The second part of this chapter examines the participants' experiences of reconceptualising space in the intervention. This is then taken forward in Chapter 5 by discussing what happened during the intervention once space had been reconceptualised by the participants, as well as, the various benefits and challenges of reconceptualising space.

The data is analysed using Lefebvre's (1991) theory of space and Foucault's (1977) notion of discourse. Careful attention is paid to firstspace which focuses on the daily routines/rituals which are perceived as realities. Firstspace is understood as the commonsensical version of space (Shields, 1990) that produces relationships to practice, things and places as it deals with the material/physical lived experiences. This is then followed by secondspace which, because of its ideological nature, acts as the cover for firstspace by rationalising firstspace. This is done through the use of images, symbols and knowledge providing representations of space.

Lastly, thirdspace is the space where the rhythm/rationality created by firstspace and secondspace is interrupted. This is because, unlike the two previous realms of social space covering the material and ideological, thirdspace focuses on the imaginative where 'othering' and 'marginalisation' is explored with the irrational and unexpected (Schmid, 2008). Firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace all constitute social space.

## **4.2. The relationship between teachers, learners and space in a government primary school before the intervention.**

Four main themes emerged from data collected prior to the intervention that provide insight into the functioning of space: time and space, classroom layout and safety, gendered spaces and the making of English space. Time is discussed first because it plays a role in all the themes by providing context that acts as content in the analyses (Doorley & Witthoft (2012).

### **4.2.1. Time and Space**

All events occur in time and space. To understand how space is produced in Eastland primary it is important to examine time because “space is nothing but the inscription of time in the world” (Lefebvre, 1991,p.157). It is, therefore, important to see how time is constituted in a school day at Eastland Primary. A school day in Eastland Primary consists of nine periods of thirty minutes and two breaks that separate the periods into three groups of three. The duration of the first break is ten minutes and the second is twenty minutes (see figure 4.1). Teachers move from class to class to teach the learners. This means that all subjects are taught in the same space with learners who are sedentary, moving only after an hour and thirty minutes<sup>6</sup>.

The interrelationship between time and classroom space helps govern rituals. By specifying the periods, time dictates to participants where they ought to be, what they ought to be doing, and even the language/s they may speak in the lived firstspace. This is ritualised through repetition. It was observed that the learners do not question the timetabled routines. They are presented as reality and the distribution of power leaves little room to do so.

The school day routines are legitimised through the secondspace symbols situated in the school that make time physical. The bell, the clock hanging on the wall of the class and the timetable printed on an A2 piece of cardboard placed on the wall are

---

<sup>6</sup> The limited movement and having children become sedentary needs to be critically considered at a time when there are growing concerns about childhood obesity (Dixon, 2011).

all material artefacts that symbolise the structuring of time and activities situated within time.

The timetable is arguably the most influential visual display on the walls as it symbolises the school routine that appears ‘neutral’ as it belongs neither to the teacher or the learner/s. In Eastland Primary, it stands in the midst of posters specifying parts of speech, national emblems, provinces and school rules. The timetable also carries an essence of being factual because of other ‘factual’ posters around it. The use of symbols gives meaning to the rituals so that they appear as reality.

Figure 4.1 Grade 6B timetable

2015 6B CLASS TIME TABLE MRS NXUMALO									
M	SS	FAL		S	HL	LS	L	MATHS	
T	LS	HL		H	NS	MATHS	O	FAL	SS
W	FAL	HL		O	MATHS	SS	N	HL	
T	NS	FAL	NS	R	MATHS	NS	B	HL	
F	MATH	HS	NS	E	LS	HL	R	SS	FAL
				A			E		
				K			A		

The repetition of the timeable cycle is internalised by the learners who have their own copies of the timetable. The English teacher, Mrs Dlamini, thus need not justify her command to ‘put away your Maths books’ or ‘take out your English DBE (Department of Basic Education) books’. The bell, clock and timetable legitimise her command. Thus, firstspace rituals and secondspace symbols collaboratively create rhythms of everyday social practices.

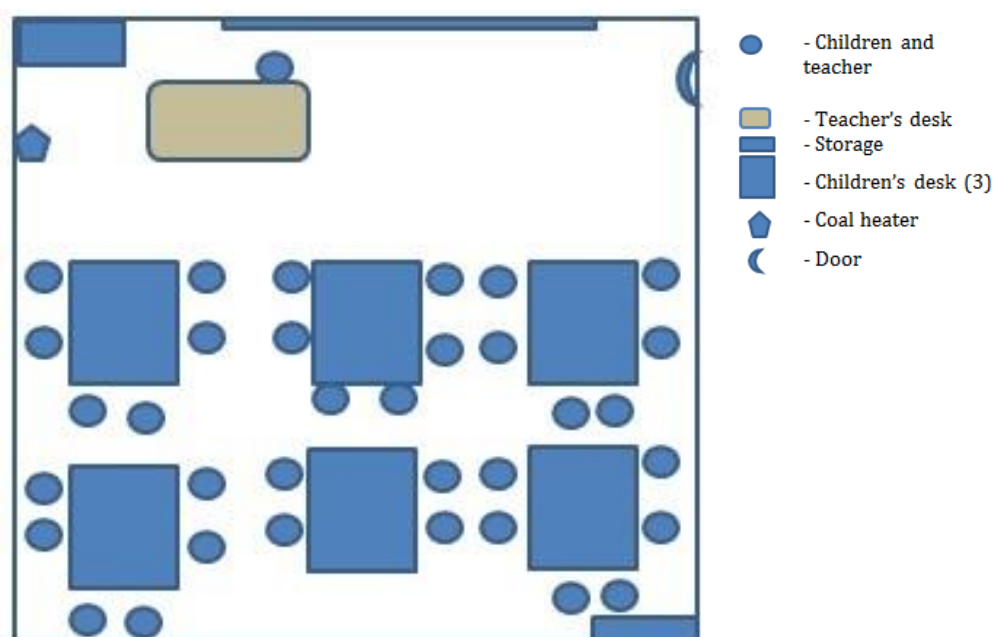
The organisation of time dictates the circulation of materials and people. At Eastland Primary, this is observable as the books and stationery items placed on the desk at different times change. During the mathematics periods the mathematics textbooks, calculators and protractors are on the desks while during English the readers and dictionaries circulate. People also circulate as the teachers who teach subjects

circulate through the classrooms and then to the staffroom and school fields. The timetable thus can help us track resources and bodies in space through the distribution of time.

The roles the participants play and the use of space also changes. At Eastland Primary during the break the teacher becomes a salesman and the learner a potential customer. This is done to raise funds for the school's working expenses. Once the bell rings for break time the teacher places food on her desks and sells the food to the students who may eat in the classroom. Some learners, however, choose to buy something else or have lunch boxes prepared. With this change the learners buy what is being sold and now move around the 'shop' and sit on a desk and speak any language as they eat. Once the bell rings, however, all of this is no longer permissible in this space.

Very little happens to the layout of the classroom (see figure 4.2) and so the changes in behaviour are mostly due to the reconceptualisation of space by the participants as space is multifunctional (Foucault, 1977). Space may have different functions and when it functions on a particular way power relations may shift, for example, where people who were previously empowered in the one space can be disempowered when the space is used for a different function. In this case in the 'tuckshop' the learners are empowered as their movements and behaviour is governed less by rules in comparison to the classroom space. In transitioning back to a learning space from the 'shop', teaching time is in many cases lost and the daily rhythm is interrupted. This is because the teacher must remove the food from the desk and balance the remaining stock with the income received. The learners likewise have to stop eating and pack away the food and take out their books. On one occasion the teacher had to ask the learners for change to give to a learner who had bought food earlier on. This all happens in the following period designated to teaching and learning. This is one example of how time is not always used efficiently.

Figure 4.2 image of the spatial layout of the classroom



The mismanagement of time is also a problem in many other South African schools as there exists “a culture which tolerates a very loosely bounded timetable: teachers and learners come and go as they please and teaching happens desultorily” (Taylor, 2008, p.24). There are high levels of teacher absenteeism and late coming in the schools and children not returning promptly after breaks. Added to this is how schools often do not start on time in the morning due to various factors like the unreliability of public transport, lack of commitment or union militancy in many schools in South Africa (Taylor, 2008).

In Eastland Primary thirdspace disruption of time has resulted in new (secondspace) rituals forming: the attendance register is completed later in the day to accommodate late children and staff<sup>7</sup>. Not all interruptions, however, are negative or go against the hierarchical predetermined roles in the school. On one occasion Mrs Dlamini was absent and prearranged for a learner to teach other learners from other classes using her resources<sup>8</sup> (Obs., 1/10/15).

<sup>7</sup> This would have been a thirdspace moment but because it is ritualised it becomes a secondspace ritual (late attendance register)

<sup>8</sup> Learners teaching other learners raises ethical questions as there is no supervision and the learners are doing what the teacher is employed and qualified to do.



In time, the function for both space and bodies is constantly changing as classrooms serve as shops and meeting places for parents' evening and likewise, teachers become salesmen and learners become teachers (Foucault, 1977). Teaching and learning in Eastland Primary is valued on the surface as it is given both time and space in the planning of a school day. The lived experiences of the participants do not always follow this strict structuring of time.

This is because thirdspace moments deconstruct the rhythm created by first and secondspace and have eroded the strong classification of time. This is notable through the mismanagement of teaching time by teachers and learners in a culture that tolerates a very loosely bounded timetable. Over time, the constant thirdspace interruptions have resulted in new practices forming with contrasting ideologies that undo the old firstspace and secondspace rhythm. Time still, however, governs the circulation of both people and material in Eastland Primary. This is because both the old and new rhythms co-exist in the same space and constantly create conflict as teachers reprimand late coming and demand punctuality while they arriving late to teach (Obs., 22/9/15).

#### **4.2.2. Classroom Layout and Safety**

The theme 'classroom layout and safety' is addressed firstly by exploring the ways in which Eastland Primary tries to create safe learning environments through the physicality of firstspace. The numerous thought patterns that justify the layout by looking at what it means to have a safe environment, operate in secondspace. This is then followed by considering how the safe space is compromised by the participants through unplanned thirdspace moments. Lastly, I look at how this affects relationships in space. I start with the environment the school is situated in, consider the school and then focus on the classroom space.

Eastland Primary is situated in a township and this is crucial to understanding the happenings in the school. This is because "the geographical location of the schools the children attend is not neutral. These locations are shaped and coloured by histories of class, race and culture" (Dixon, 2011, p.7). Schools located in townships are often not safe because of where they are located. Township schools are often characterised by poverty, overcrowding and crime (Dixon & Dornbrack 2015).

Schools which are said to be successful in such contexts appear to have two traits: a culture of teaching and learning as well as a safe and supportive environment (Dixon & Dornbrack 2015).

The layout of the school indicates that the school seeks to provide a safe environment for learners and teachers. This is observable from the green fence placed around the school and the jungle gym to prevent unsupervised access. There are also security guards at the school controlling the access to the school. In order to enter one needs to specify the reason for the visit and provide identification. Access to classrooms is through the office which is another way in which entry is controlled spatially.

Firstspace materiality in the classroom such as the chalkboard, seating arrangements and door is rationalised socially by participants who produce meaning to what is experienced by the senses. These thought patterns are situated in secondspace because, unlike firstspace materiality, they are not observable but instead add meaning to the physicality of the lived experiences and create rituals: learners stand when teachers walk in the door, certain seats are for teachers only and only the teacher writes on the chalkboard etc. These rituals help control and distribute bodies in space by the dominant power, often by utilising symbols (Schmid, 2008) so that they appear as natural actions in the school that create a safe environment.

Mrs Dlamini, the teacher, functions as the architect in arranging and designing the physicality of space. She does this by working with secondspace ideas about her envisaged classroom to legitimise routines. The narrow rows in her classroom legitimise the desire to prohibit running in classroom and the pathways created by the placement of the furniture ensure the learners do not walk on the polished front portion of the classroom (see figure. 4.3). The learners' seats and desks all face the front of the classroom. The arrangement of furniture makes it clear that the legitimate place to focus one's attention is in front where both the teacher and the chalkboard are situated (Manke, 1994). To the learner the designer is invisible and their movements and focus are normalised by the layout (Schmid, 2008). To the outsider who has not internalised the learners' movement patterns it appears strange to have

a learner walk in the classroom to communicate with the teacher and take a detour to avoid the polished floor instead of simply walking towards the teacher (see figure 4.3). In designing the space teachers create specialised zones for everyday activities such as work, leisure and travel. These zones, directly and indirectly, control bodies.

Another symbol used to create a structured and safe environment in the classroom is the list of school rules placed on the wall. Together the school layout and the teacher's classroom arrangement facilitate a safe a rhythmic environment. This rhythm, however, does not ensure the school is completely protected from the outside environment or internal deviant behaviour.

With all the rituals and symbols that are meant to provide a safe environment the thirdspace, imagined space, provides an adjacent lived experience. Below is the first COE where learners raising several concerns questioning the level of safety in the school.

- R:** What is a classroom?  
**S7:** A place where everybody gets education...  
**S8:** We don't respect each other  
**R:** Why are you saying that?  
**S8:** Some people steal from each other

- R:** Is there anything you would like to change about the classroom?...  
**S11:** We would like cameras in our classroom so that we can see who is stealing in the class  
**S15:** We would like people to sit alone so that people can't copy.

Key: (**R**: researcher and **S**: Students)

During the observations, as is common in many schools regardless of where they are located, there were cases of learners' stationery being stolen by other learners. Mrs Dlamini at times brushed off the learners cries of theft to ensure continuity in the lesson or dealt with the cases briefly. There was very little handling of this as a serious issue.

Amidst the safety regulations, this classroom is still considered unsafe by learners. Firstly, the learners' uneasiness is increased by the reality that lost belongings cannot be replaced with ease by the parents who are often unemployed. In the event that a textbook lent to a learner by the school is stolen the parent/s may not be able to replace it and the child may face various consequences e.g. the withholding of report cards (int.S8, 27/10/2015). All this amplifies the uneasiness in learner to learner relations.

Secondly, the mismanagement of time where there is no teacher present and/or no actual teaching or learning taking place creates opportune times for the theft of property to occur. There is no adult supervision when a teacher is travelling to the next classroom to teach, when the teacher is late for school or absent and when learners are still returning from break. This places the belongings of learners and teachers at risk. What results is a school culture where theft is normalised.

Lastly, during group work learners need to work together to reach a common goal. This includes sharing of resources and space. Unsafe learning environments compromise group work as the relations amongst participants can be unproductive as learners need to guard their belongings against other group members. If a child rightly refuses to lend a pair of scissor to a group member who once stole his ruler learning time is lost (Obs.1/10/ 2015).

#### **4.2.3. Gendered spaces**

This section firstly shows how gender is emphasised in different spaces in the school by (1) the layout of the school, (2) the teachers and (3) the learners. This is followed by considering the implications of how this creates antagonistic relations amongst the boys and girls.

The discourse in the first COE reveals how space in Eastland Primary is gendered when the researcher asked if there was anything 6B would like to change about the classroom.

- S1:** Sir, No, the girls must select boys and the boys then select girls so we can all talk [class voted and all were in favour, the way forward adopted]
- S2:** The floor, (why) we [girls] clean so hard and the boys make it dirty
- S8:** I want our classroom to just have girls only
- S13:** To have two colours on the wall in the classroom one for girls and one for boys.
- S1:** The fact that the ladies clean the class alone  
(COE1, 13/9/15)

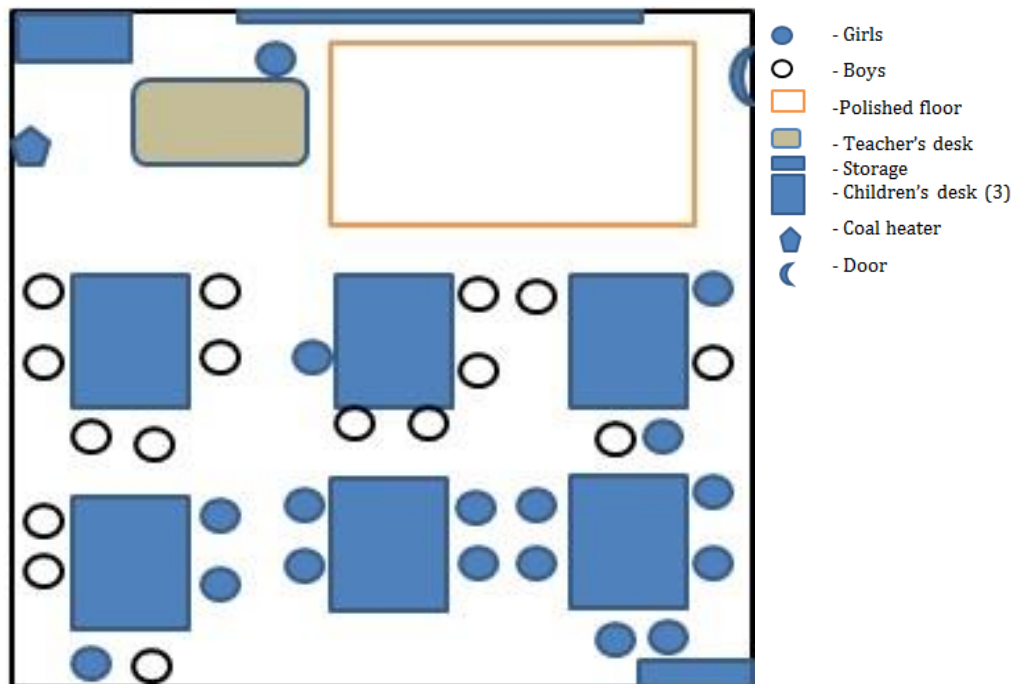
The structuring of the school's firstspace rituals in Eastland Primary creates and assigns roles, behavioural patterns and expectations. These roles separate girls and boys. In assembly on Mondays, learners assemble in their classes forming two rows one for boys and one for girls. The two rows also make it easy to notice the differences in uniforms for girls and boys. Boys wear white shirts while girls wear blue and green shirts and dresses. When the learners leave the assembly and enter the classroom the girls leave and enter first and then are followed by the boys (Obs, 2015).

The teachers also present and promote social norms as in the spaces they teach in. The homeroom teacher distributes labour/tasks based on questionable societal norms: the girls do the mopping and the polishing of the classroom floor daily at the beginning of the school day and at the end of the day as the boys head home. When asked why this was so the justification was that girls needed to be groomed to become ladies (Int.T3, 27/10/2015). This discourse used by the teacher established roles and gender in the classroom as it controls how learners think and behave (Weedon, 1987; Foucault, 1977).

The seating arrangement in 6B is largely assigned by the homeroom teacher as the other teachers seldom alter the seating. In 6B, the seating arrangement shows how in a class of seventeen girls and sixteen boys only four desks of two have a boy and a girl sitting together. In the other seven groups formed by the teacher three are groups and made up of boys or girls exclusively (see figure 4.3). The learners also play a role in the apparent separation as the teacher mentioned learners could ask to

be seated elsewhere provided they had a good reason (Obs, 27/10/2015; Int, 27/10/2015).

Fig 4.3 Gendered Spatial layout of classroom space



The observations also show how the learners group themselves by gender and conform to the status quo presented to them. In one English lesson, the class had to make phones using tins and string and have a dialogue in front of the classroom in pairs. All the pairs were of the same gender.

The COEs were run with the rule that the person who is speaking decided from the stretched hands who would speak next. Early on in the third COE, the class unanimously decided that the speakers select the opposite sex to avoid having only the boys selecting boys only or girls selecting girls only in the democratic discussion which is what had been happening. (Int, S1, 27/9/2015). In 6B, there are antagonistic relations amongst the girls and the boys. Girls and boys are constantly at conflict with each other as they fight for space to learn, a turn to speak, equal responsibilities in maintaining a clean class, and even a colour to repaint the walls during COE

discussions. Unable to have a new social formation where learners learn in separate spaces (COE1, S8,27/09/15) the learners utilise their agency to form exclusive groups for boys/girls during group work. The curriculum assessment policy (CAPS) (DoE 2011) requires that relationships amongst teachers and learners show sensitivity to gender issues. In 6B, there are strong gender boundaries that do not create strong collegial relations.

#### 4.2.4. The Making of Space in the English Classroom

An extract of a grade 6B English reading lesson in Eastland Primary:

<p>T: Good Morning grade 6  C: Good Morning Mrs Dlamini  T: you may be seated.  <i>T: let's check the homework(walks around)</i>  <i>T: Why didn't you do your homework?...you are behind! What do you do when the other children are working... you disappoint me</i>  T: let read out the sentences ... (learners read the 5 sentences together)  T: write today's date and grade  Teacher models this on the board</p>	<p>- <u>Grade 6 Lesson 13,14,15 30 September 2015</u>  <i>Reading and Viewing –Pre-reading- post reading</i>  <i>When David Died ...</i>  T: Can we define the words  S1: Ancestors are people who died long ago  T: Good, what is heaven?  S2: heaven is a place where God lives  T: Good!  T: What does frighten mean?  T: ... I was frightened when I saw the snake  S3: It means <i>to be scared</i>  T: Yes! Or to be afraid</p>
---	---

English lesson 30/9/15

The English lesson begins when Mrs Dlamini walks into the classroom. This is followed by the learners standing and greeting the teacher and the teacher greeting the learners and then permitting them to be seated. Homework is then checked and marked as the teacher walks around the classroom and scans learners' books. The homework is usually marked by chorusing the answers. The teacher instructs learners to date the day's lesson and models this on the board. The discourse patterns in the classroom follow the initiate, response, evaluation (IRE) pattern as the teacher initiates, learners respond and the teacher then evaluates what is said(Rose, 2003a; Culican, 2005). In English class, the firstspace rituals are well structured and it is clear the teacher oversees both the learning and all other activities. This is because learners ask for permission to walk to a friend to borrow stationery, drink water from the bucket in front and to go to the bathroom. Although

the classroom is used for all subjects a large percentage of the posters are English subject posters and seven hours are designated for English (FAL) per week.

#### **4.3. Teacher and learners describe their experiences of transitioning from the current classroom space to reconceptualised classroom spaces**

I now focus on the reconceptualisation of space and how participants prepared and responded to playing a role. In the data, two themes emerge when reconceptualising the classroom: belonging and agency. In order to discuss these themes, I describe the first three community of enquiries.

##### **4.3.1. Community of Enquiry**

A community of enquiry (COE) is a pedagogy that positions its participants as able meaning-makers and problem-posers (Haynes & Murriss, 2012). Throughout the research three COEs were held in Eastland Primary in the second week and at the end of the research. The learners were seated in a circle as the members of the class engaged in a whole class democratic discussion so participants vocalised their thinking. In all COEs, the participants had interesting insights and experiences to discuss. A total of three COE's were held Eastland Primary. The first COE was to understand the participants conceptions and perceptions of the current space and living in it. The second COE was to begin discussions on designing a new space and reconceptualising the space. The third COE was to reflect on the entire process and the experiences of living in the reconceptualised space.

The first COE's purpose was to understand how the participants saw their own classroom space and classrooms in general. Three questions were discussed: 1) What is a classroom? 2) Who does the classroom belong to? And 3) what would you like to change about the current classroom space? Once this was done learners were then divided into groups and shown images of different classroom spaces.

In the second COE after the break, the learners collaborated on designing a new classroom space having to take into consideration the desires and grievances from



the first COE. Groups selected members to present their desired classroom. After each presentation, learners could ask the group presenting questions about the classroom design. After all the groups had presented, the designs were placed on the board and the class voted for the classroom they would like to try to design during the holidays.

The third COE was held at the end of the sixth week. The goal was to reflect on the reconceptualisation, redesign and experiences of living in this space.

This research conceptualises discourse as the ways of constituting knowledge, social practices, forms of subjectivity and knowledge/power relations. In reconceptualising space the research studies how discourse both prior to and after the reconceptualisation constitutes the un/conscious mind and emotions of the participants. The reconceptualisation of space then provides participants with another the site to critique and resists the 'truth' status discourse apparent in the space and other discourses that governs both the social practices and subjects in the space (Weedon, 1987).

#### **4.3.1.1. Social relations in space**

One of the unanticipated implications of a having one space where learners are located and the opening up of time, meant that the children are often left unattended. This helped build relations through discourse as the learners began to have conversations with the researcher (Foucault, 1977). This was done by constantly answering the learners' questions that sought to understand my role as a researcher and theirs roles as participants were. These roles revolved around power and social practices 'who gets to do/ say what' and in turn constitutes the un/consciousness of the learners. The result of such talks was brought the researcher and the participants closer as knowledge was shared and both parties found it easier to voice opinions and concerned with far less worry as there was a general consensus. During the talk in the 'gaps' in time trust was built overtime and both the researcher as knowledge and social practices and power relations where became more transparent (Weedon, 1987).

Below are the questions asked by participants and researcher during the classroom observation 'gaps':

#### Learners

What are you busy writing?(21/9/15)  
 What will you do to the recordings?(22/9/15)  
 What is this (research field notes) for?  
 (22/9/15)  
 Are you going to teach here? (21/9/15)

#### Researcher

Who cleans the classroom?(21/9/15)  
 Who's your favourite teacher?(21/9/15)  
 Which languages can you speak in class?(28/10/15)  
 Why are you seated like this?(22/9/15)

In these 'gaps', learners voiced their thoughts and began to see that I was not another teacher. For example, when the learners misbehaved I did not reprimand them. This appears to have helped ensure that the COE's ran well. In schools where time is tightly managed, however, these opportunities to build trust may be more challenging.

### **4.3.2. Belonging and Ownership**

Below I have selected some responses from the learners during the COE that explore the participants' sense of belonging and ownership in the classroom and the broader schooling context prior the reconceptualisation.

- R: Okay so the first question we will discuss is what is a classroom?
- S1: A classroom is a class where... children and other people read
- S2: A classroom is a space where learners can do anything that they want... but without making noise...
- S3: A classroom is a place where children learn
- S4: Not only children but also other adults learn
- S7: A place where everybody gets education....
- S3: A classroom is a place where children learn...
- R: The next question is who does the classroom belong to?
- S9: The classroom belongs to the learners and the teacher  
 [Class applauds in agreement]
- R: Okay the next question, is there anything you would like to change about this classroom?
- S1: I would like to change the ceiling (why) because it is broken and the tables.
- R: What would you like to change about the tables?
- S1: The colour (what colour would you want) everybody must choose their own colours (whole class applauds in agreement)
- S6: I want our class to have curtains...

S7: I want our class to have our photos on the walls...  
(COE1, 13/10/15)

In the beginning of the first COE, learners were asked who the classroom belonged to. When a learner responded mentioning that the classroom belonged to both the teachers and the learners the class broke out in applause. The learners both celebrated and affirmed their ownership and sense of belonging in the classroom space (COE1, S9, 13/10/2015). This response is expected as their understanding of what a classroom is revolved around teaching and learning done by both the learners and the teacher in space as “not only children [learn] but other adults learn [as well]” (COE1, S4, 13/10/2015).

In Eastland Primary because of the shortage of firstspace classroom has resulted in the ritualization of teachers traveling from class to class to teach (secondspace). The learners remain in the same class for all subjects. The idea of classroom space belonging to the learners is amplified as they spend more time in the class than anyone else. The learners' lexicon also shows how learners both acknowledged and demanded ownership of the classroom space as the phrase “I want our class.” (COE1, S6/7/8, 13/10/2015) was repeated by learners. The first COE also shows that learners recognise that this space is shared with teachers, other learners and everyone who may be educated.

There are also moments where the ownership/belonging is apparent in the data in subtle ways. When asked to talk about the initial classroom learners foregrounded their displeasure with the classroom labelling it as 'old' (COE3, S1/3, 27/10/2015). One learner stated that the classroom looked like it belonged to 'grannies' (COE3, S6, 27/10/2015).

This implied it did not look like it belonged to the children. This statement made by the learner is telling as it is said because it is ironic as the classroom, in fact, belongs to young learners. The irony amplifies how learners also want to belong to the space because had they not wanted to belong then this statement would not be worth mentioning. Learners are expressing however that more could be done to make this a space one wants to belong in. Two reasons are provided why this was so.

Firstly, the classroom is not well maintained. Students noted:

S1: I would like to change the ceiling because it is broken and the tables.

S3: I would like to change the door (why) we want a sliding door, the door is broken.

S10: I would like to remove the chalkboard because it's old and have a touch screen

S14: We would also like to fix the desks because they have holes

(COE1, 13/10/15)

The door, ceiling, storage unit, desks and walls are damaged. To belong in such a space means that the current condition of the classroom is a reflection of the children and teachers. The broken down condition according to Mrs Ziba is because the school currently does not have the funds to repair the above and repairs take time to be processed (Int., Ziba, 27/9/2015). Although the learners are not proud of the appearance of the space a high sense of ownership and belonging still exists. The learners' desire to belong in space justifies why they constantly want to upgrade and fix the firstspace materials in the classroom because it acts as a secondspace representation of the learners. More, however, could be done to make this a space where they want to belong in.

Secondly, Clark and Linder (2006) describe a grade nine class in Yengeni High school where, similar to Eastland Primary, once the learners have drifted home in the afternoon no hint of the students remains "no clues as to who they are and what their interest may be" (Clark & Linder, 2006, p.21). There seems to be little sense of belonging or ownership in the physicality of the space. Unlike Yengeni High the learners in 6B in their discussions are constantly trying to rectify this. They want to have the sense of belonging they expressed in the firstspace physicality of the classroom to justify perhaps to self and other learners that this is their space.

The homeroom teacher also wished to have the classroom repaired because it likewise symbolises her. For this reason, she welcomed the repairs and redecorating, asking to keep the classroom and not have the grade 6B remain in it the following year. Mrs Ziba arranged to have the ceiling repaired after being discouraged by the delay from the school (Int, Ziba, 27/9/2015).

During the interview, the English teacher stated that “the learners were not attached to their classroom it was just a class where they go in and leave there was no sense of ownership or belonging” (Int., Dlamini, 27/10/2015). The data show that this is not the case, while learners want to belong in space it appears that the school fails to meet learners half way by repairing and upgrading the space or prioritising an agenda to do so.

The learners and teacher are thus constantly trying to change the re-establish social formations through the power that knowledge and discourse has in controlling individuals during the COE: by requesting that the ceiling is fixed, their photos be placed on the wall, to have desks painted the colours they like and have brighter colours (COE1, 13/10/2015). If these requests are met, then when anyone enters the classroom space and sees the fixed classroom, learner’s photos, bright colours, differently coloured desks it would better represent the learners and teacher. This happened during parents evening when parents were impressed with the appearance of the space and this delighted Mrs Ziba (Int., Ziba, 27/10/15).

#### **4.3.3. Agency and Voice**

The focus now shifts to looks at agency and voice. Voice refers to the learners’/teachers’ capacity to speak up and be heard and agency refers to the learners’/teachers’ capacity to make decisions about their own life and act on them to achieve desired outcomes (World Bank Group, 2014). Prior to looking at agency I will first discuss where and how space was made to encourage agency and voice. In the research project learners’ agency and voice, although present throughout the research is most evident in the second COE and the holiday activities. This is because in presenting and designing their own desired classrooms in the second COE learners constantly spoke as they redesigned the classroom. Four days during

the holiday learners utilised their agency as they worked towards creating their desired classroom. Room for both agency and voice is made available by working in thirdspace. In thirdspace learners interrupt the rhythm created by firstspace and secondspace. This rhythm was interrupted by encouraging learners to work imaginatively by designing a new classroom and then following through with the redesign.

Learners operated in secondspace by being guided by their thoughts on what a classroom is. This interrupted the daily rhythm of learners learning in classrooms as they began to design and critique classrooms. This ultimately meant questioning the power and authority of the school and teachers, something that seldom happens in traditional hierarchical classrooms.

Below are the five figures (figure 4.4- 4.8) from the learners during the second COE. The selected classroom design is placed at the end and enlarged (figure 5.8).

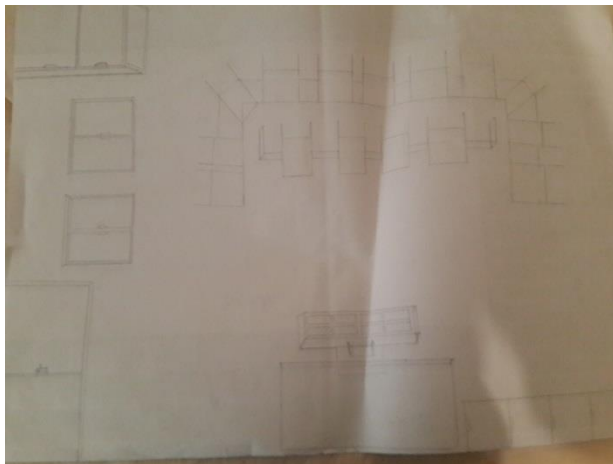


Figure 4.4 Classroom design 1  
(Learners ran out of time and could not add colour)

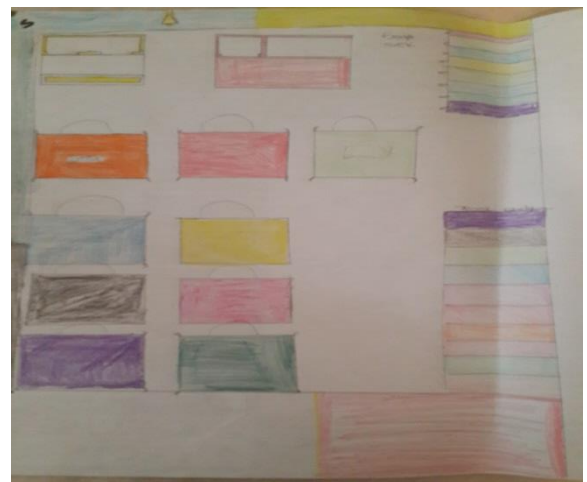


Figure 4.5 Classroom design 3

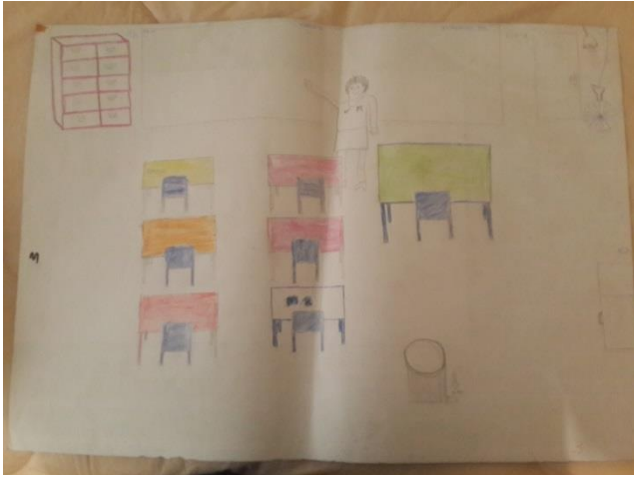


Figure 4.6 Classroom design 4

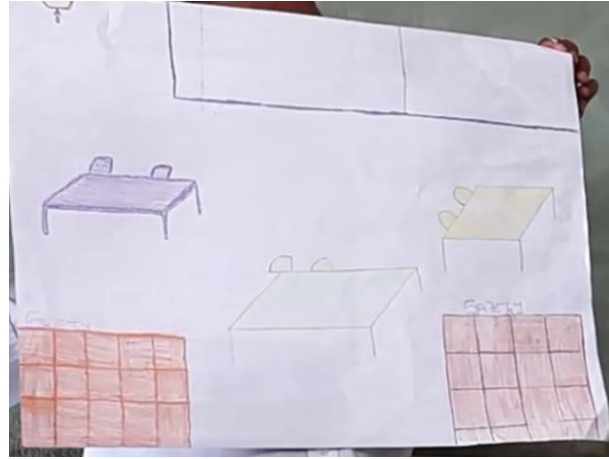
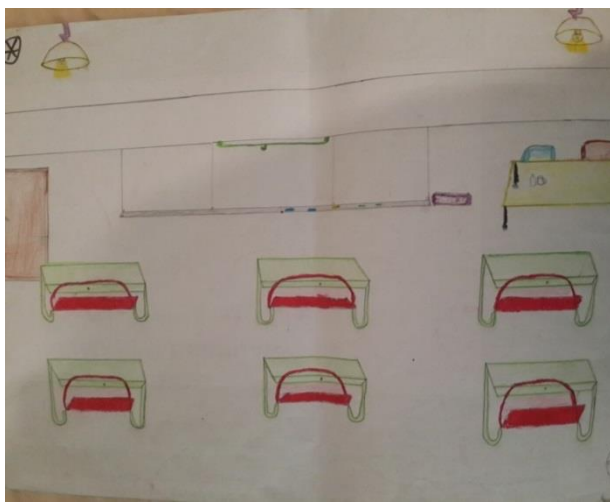


Figure 4.8 classroom design 2



The democratically selected classroom by the learners in 6B

Figure 4.7 Classroom design 5

#### 4.3.3.1. Lighting and Colour

In presenting their classrooms groups had the following to say as they utilised voice when presenting their dream classrooms to peers for buy in prior to voting for a classroom.

As you can see we want new lights that are round not the dim ones (pointing to the ones currently in class). We want a lighter chalkboard and a door that is brown that has decorations and tables. (Video presentation, Group2, 2015)

We want the walls to be light blue. Different colour desks selected by each learner, because people like different colours. (Video presentation, Group3, 13/10/2015)

Light colours so that we can see in the class. (Video presentation, Group4, 13/10/2015)

Different colour tables selected by the children. Our lights we would like to have different colours.” (Video presentation, Group5, 13/10/2015)

The figures of the classrooms and learner comments reveal that learners firstly, struggle to see as the classroom is dim because the colours are dull and the light does not shine brightly (Video presentation, Group5, 13/10/ 2015). The walls in Eastland Primary are cream but the numerous posters cover the walls and so even this light colour is blocked. Secondly, learners prefer classes that have a variety of bright colours to match learners’ varying needs. This is evident from the presentations and the observations as all of the classroom designs/presentations foregrounded colour.

#### **4.3.3.2. Safety in Space**

The learners also voiced their fears and frustrations with the lack of safety. Having done this they provided various possible solutions to the lack of safety. In the group presentation, learners made firstspace changes like the installation of cameras to identify who is stealing and reduce theft in the school (Group presentation, G3, 13/10/2015) as well as curtains to prevent outsiders from seeing inside the classroom (Group presentation, G1, 13/10/2015). Learners then proposed the use of lockers and safes in the classroom so that they could store their books and property. Secondly, learners in Eastland Primary who are seated in groups (see figure 4.2) asked to sit alone so that other learners are not able to copy (Group presentation, G5, 13/10/2015). The classroom designs reveal how every classroom incorporates lockers or a storage facility to protect the learners’ personal belongings. Currently, the cupboard in the classroom stores the school’s textbooks and the teacher’s personal belongings only.

As discussed earlier, crime is more prevalent in township schools because of their locations. What is thought provoking is the request made by a group in the presentation which asked for “lockers to guard against kids that steal like a private school” (Group presentation, G5, 2015). Clearly the learners are aware of the structural differences in their school and private schools. What is of interest is the



possibility that the lower levels of crime in private schools may be because more is done to prevent theft. Ironically in contexts with more crime like Eastland Primary less is done. As there are no cameras, the cupboards are not locked and in 6B, the security gate is broken.

#### **4.3.3.3. The Learners' Bodies, Books And Bags**

Below are some of the discussion points from both the COE and the group presentation where participants where raised concerns about the state of their bodies, books and bags:

S5 : What I would like to do is have all of us have laptops in the class

R : Why?

S2/3: Because our bags are heavy and some of us walk far distances to get to school (refers to learners who stay far from school and walk) and our books and bags get damaged.

The teacher and we, the learners, also wants to have tablets or computers ... because our books are heavy. If we have books then we want to have a place to store them here...(Group presentation, G1, 13/10/2015)

Initially the learners' firstspace changes of having computers/tablets, sliding doors, smartboards, and comfortable chairs, although farfetched, seemed predictable. These changes would operate in firstspace because they deal with the physicality of the classroom. The justification of the required change operating in secondspace rationalising the above tangible changes are profound. Learners explained how many of the learners lived more than two kilometres from the school and walk to the school and carrying a heavy bag with all their books and textbooks. This is harmful to the learners' backs and over time damages the bags and books inside. If these books and bags are damaged they cannot be easily replaced by parents due to financial constraints.

Learners were prepared to negotiate a settlement. Learners were prepared to settle for a "place to store them [books] here [in class]" (Group presentation, G1, 13/10/2015) if laptops could not be procured. Group two even added that desks with built-in compartments could be bought to store the heavy books (Group presentation,

G2, 13/10/2015). The communicative pattern existent in the school seldom allows for the learners to question teachers let alone make requests and so thirdspace opens up space for learners to voice such ideas and views or utilise agency. Having these firstspace changes materialise would result in a shift in rituals for teaching and learning as well as new power dynamics that would empower learners by giving them access to knowledge apart from the teacher (Foucault, 1977). This is because the school discourse that holds 'truth' like status silences learners and now having changed the physicality of the space taking the learners' contributions seriously presents another discourse that challenges and critiques the dominant discourse that empowers learner. Later we see how these new power relations in the space facilitate a push back from the learners (Weedon, 1987).

#### 4.3.3.4. **The selected design**

The classroom redesign that won the democratic election is group 2's classroom. Similar to all the other designs although the learners had several over-the-top material expectations like sliding doors, laptops or tablets, touchscreen boards, television sets etc. In the sketches, this design (Group 2) and the other designs were realistic and attainable.

Group two's design also incorporates tables with a lockable storage facility for the heavy books and to ensure the books and belongings are kept safe. The classroom also has two lights on the roof to ensure that the classroom is bright and learners are able to see. The design makes use of colour as desks are green (the school colour), chairs are red, the board is white, the teacher's desk is yellow and the teacher's chairs are brown and blue. The classroom has a dustbin at the back of the class (see figure 4.8).

In the second half of this chapter the teachers' and learners' experiences of transitioning to a new classroom presented the central points. Learners expressed a sense of belonging and ownership of the original classroom. This sense, however, is weakened by the poor condition in the classroom and how little in the materiality of the class reflects the learners' interests. Secondly, the traditional hierarchical relation in Eastland Primary minimises learner agency and voice. In the transition thirdspace

opened up and learners' agency and voice increased. This resulted in strengthening ownership and belonging as learners imaginatively considered how they could repair and personalise classroom.

We are constituted by space and so when learners redesign space through thirdspace they in turn un/ knowingly let space reconstitute them. The learners have now altered the classroom space as was expected. The change in space presents new secondspace relations and roles that shift power relations as well as teacher and learner identities presenting new possibilities that in many cases are not welcomed by the recipients. This is because although the firstspace changes may have been mutually agreed upon, once we live in space we experience a surplus of inexhaustible consequences that cannot be analysed or expressed completely (Adams, 2009 cited in Sheehy (2009)). In response to this participants may close down thirdspace for a more stable experience and this is still possible because the production of space is always unfinished.



Figure 4.9 Thirdspace interrupting the rhythm of first and secondspace

The figure above shows how thirdspace (3) interrupts firstspace (1) and secondspace (2) and brings about new possibilities but still allows for change as the production of space is continuous. In the next chapter, we both discuss the changes and see how participants respond to the new possibilities (figure 4.9).

## Chapter 5

### Lived Experiences in Reconceptualised Space

#### Introduction

The previous chapter concluded by looking at the participants' plans to redesign their classroom. The focus was largely on the process of moving from the current classroom space to an imaginative new classroom space and justification for their choices. In this chapter, I examine how participants constitute space in their redesigned classroom and how space, in turn, constitutes them (Lefebvre, 1991) as they lived in the new space.

This chapter addresses three research questions: the teachers' and learners' experiences of transitioning from the current classroom space to a reconceptualised space during the redesigning/learning in the classroom space. I also return to the first research question as I analyse the relationships between teacher, learners and space as I compare and contrast the 'old' and 'new' classroom space relations. Lastly, I look at how this informs teacher and learner 'identities'.

#### **5.1. Transitioning from the current classroom space to reconceptualised classroom spaces**

##### **5.1.1 Describing the transition**

The redesign of the classroom took place at the end of the third term during the week long holiday. Four days were dedicated to changing the classroom space Monday – Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> October 2015. 70% of the learners attended and the principal and deputy principal came occasionally to provide oversight. Each day had its own specific tasks for the learners. Figure 5.1 is an image of the initial classroom.

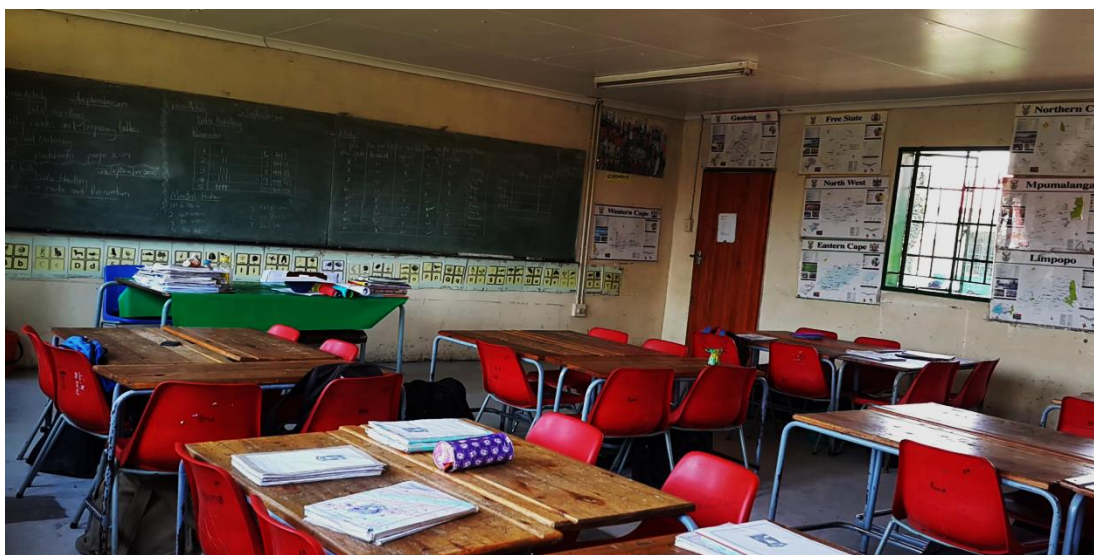


Figure 5.1 Original classroom space

#### Day One:

The first day began with learners and the researcher clearing out all the furniture from the classroom. The posters were then removed and also stored. Once this was done learners cleaned the classroom space. We then discussed additional changes learners wanted to make to the classroom. During the democratic meeting, two notable changes were made. Firstly, having a seating arrangement similar to that in group one's presentation with learners forming a semi-circle (see classroom design figure 4). This was selected because it was different and looked fun-to-do in the sketches handed out in the second COE (see appendix L: Community of enquiry). The second change was inspired by Mrs Ziba to paint the classroom two shades of green. Learners were tasked to go home and think of images, symbols, shapes etc. that they would like to have on the walls.

#### Day Two:

The learners presented ideas and then voted for the ideas to be implemented and selected the two shades of green paint. Planned activities were explained to the learners and they had to select what they wanted to participate in based on their interests. In events where there were more learners than the given number for a task learners played "rock paper scissors". The learners who lost selected something else to do. The tasks of the days were as follows:

- 1) Printing and cutting out the decorations.
- 2) Buy the paint and the painting materials with the two hired painters.
- 3) Paint and repairing the walls.
- 4) Designing the completed classroom on the given templates to obtain buy-in from the learners throughout the redesigning.
- 5) Guard and distributing the food to all.

In each of the five groups, a leader was appointed by the learners who then relayed decisions to the researcher and passed on information to the group from the researcher.

#### Day Three:

On day three the second coat was painted on the walls. The researcher informed learners about the formation of a learners' blog. The blog is to give learners having a voice and a classroom that reflects their interests situated in secondspace. At the back of the classroom, a section of the wall was given to the learners to place images and articles of anything that they find interesting. The only rule to facilitate the ritualization of the blog was that the texts should be appropriate and not have any nudity and obscene language. Prior to placing anything on the learners' blog the teacher had to provide consent. To begin utilising the learners' blog, girls and boys divided into groups and discussed and finalised five images they would like to place on the learners' blog. This is labelled a 'blog' because while it is not a website it still acts as a page where learners can 'post' text informally in a conversational style. To balance the learners' interest with educational goals in the classroom learners selected encouraging educational quotes from a list provided by the researcher on day three after finalising the images for the learner's blog.

#### Day Four

The ten images provided by the learners, which were mostly artists and sports people, were placed on the learners' blog. The quotations were also then placed on the painted walls with the decorations the learners bought and made. A learner, whose occupational aspiration is to be an interior designer, oversaw the placement of quotes and decorations. Once this was done the classroom was then cleaned.



Initially, the boys wanted to refrain from the cleaning because usually the girls did such tasks in Mrs Ziba's classroom but, to continue promoting fairness the researcher asked everyone to participate. After this, the furniture was returned to the classroom and the desks arranged as desired. Below are the images of the redesigned classroom Fig.5.2 and 5.3.



Figure 5.2: Back View of classroom



Figure 5.3: Front View of classroom

### **5.1.2 Findings From The Redesigning**

In redesigning the classroom space during the holidays interesting data surfaced explaining the overwhelming attendance and conflict due to the gendered antagonistic relations previously noted. In redesigning space we altered social formations, knowledge and social practices as these constructs are constituted by space (Leander, Phillips & Taylor, 2010; Lefebvre, 1991).

This is what learners had to say when asked what they enjoyed doing in the holidays:

S1: I enjoyed the eating

S1: The snowball game

S2: I enjoyed working with you in the class and thank you, sir,

S3: I enjoyed shopping

S4: I enjoyed painting

S5: I also enjoyed the food you provided

(COE3, 27/10/15)

From the beginning until the final day of reconstituting space about 70% of the learners came to work during their break from school. In discussions with the learners, they preferred to come to school to work ironically to avoid working at home during the holidays. Learners asked to stay longer than the four hours. This is because of two reasons. Firstly the learners had fun during the redesigning as they dressed in overalls stained with paint, went shopping for décor, played games and shared a meal together. Secondly, the learners were doing all the work for themselves and enjoyed seeing their decisions materialise in reality. When having to choose between working at home versus working at school the learners chose the lesser of two evils. This is because working at school was both fun and self-fulfilling (COE3, 27/10/15). There was, however, conflict amidst all the fun.

Two incidents are described where learners' antagonistic relations resulted in conflict amongst boys and girls. Initially, boys did not want to clean as this task is usually reserved for the 'soon to be women' by Mrs Ziba the homeroom teacher. This resulted in boys stepping aside and wanting the girls to mop the floor. Secondly,



most of the learners wanted to paint and the boys labelled this as a manly task in hopes to gain preference. These are forms of 'accepted' gendered social practices. All the cleaning in Eastland Primary is done by women and likewise, the two hired painters are male. This justified the stereotypical social practices presented in space. In dealing with the conflict in space, social practices were challenged as we questioned what it means to be male/female. The conflict was thus dealt with by presenting an alternative discourse where boys and girls clean, paint and move heavy objects in the class together. The researcher who is male took on cleaning and other tasks to help present the alternative reality. This was to both visually and through discourse challenge and establish new gender norms and change power relations (Foucault, 1977). Learners played "rock-paper scissors" to select who would perform particular tasks when more than the allocated number of learners desired to do a particular task. This provided a fun and fair way of solving what could have been a contentious issue. Playing together helped begin having learners form a community helping each other.

In the four days, learners began to behave communally as they consistently looked after each other. When learners had gone shopping the team in charge of food spontaneously packed lunch for them and set it aside. The learners who arrived early fetched other learners with their bicycles. Likewise, learners who did not talk together often worked together in groups and communicated effectively making decisions. The girls selecting décor would constantly ask if boys will also like the décor and ended up buying flowers for the girls and glow in the dark musical instruments for the boys, which the boys loved, and bought the teacher flowers to decorate her desk. The interior designer who is female let the boys help in placing the posters on the learners' blog. What makes these findings interesting is that this is the same group of boys and girls who were known to be at odds with each other.

In the final COE seven of nine grade 6B learners commented that they enjoyed the redesigning more than learning in the designed space (COE4, SX,8/2/16). Arguably what is significant for the learners is not the changed classroom they later learnt in but perhaps that the learners changed the classroom themselves and had fun doing so.

The firstspace changes in the redesigning of space altered the roles and relations in space. As the learners, placed flowers on the teachers' desk, shifted furniture and painted walls the secondspace was altered and as learners are playing new roles and initiating new routines that alter the existing power relations.

## **5.2 How a reconceptualisation of classroom space informs learner and teacher identities as they began to live in space**

The focus now turns to look at learners' and teachers' experiences of living in the redesigned space. In examining this we see how space reconstitutes learners and teachers as well as teaching and learning. In 6B, we see how a sense of community and belonging plays out.

### **5.2.1 Belonging In Space**

When asked about painting the walls two shades of green the learners had the following to say:

The vast majority who liked the green stated it was because:

“It matches the school uniform” (COE4., SAW, 9/02/15)

“Represents the school” (COE4., SAX, 9/02/15)

“The classroom is nice and the colour reminds me of my bedroom” (COE3, S5, 27/10/15)

The one learner who opposed this change, who was from another grade 6 class, now in grade seven had the following justification.

“there is already too much green in this school” (COE4, SAY, 9/02/15)

Initially, the class of 6B painted the classroom walls two shades of green because the colours were pleasing to the eye, would brighten up the room and were the official school colours (COE2, 2015). Once the learners began to live in the reconstituted space they started commenting on how space now better represented the school.

The decision to have green walls is an indication of the learners' desire to belong to the school and be a part of Eastland Primary, which shifts the discourses around belonging. In selecting the school colours learners want to be included and heard.

During the first COE: this desire to belong was also evident in how learners also discussed painting “Our walls are a South African flag and a ceiling with the school badge” (Group Presentation, G5, 2015). Learners desire to belong to both the country and the school. This point cannot be overstressed because unlike moving furniture the painting of the walls is more permanent and provides the learners with an opportunity to make a mark in the classroom for all to see.

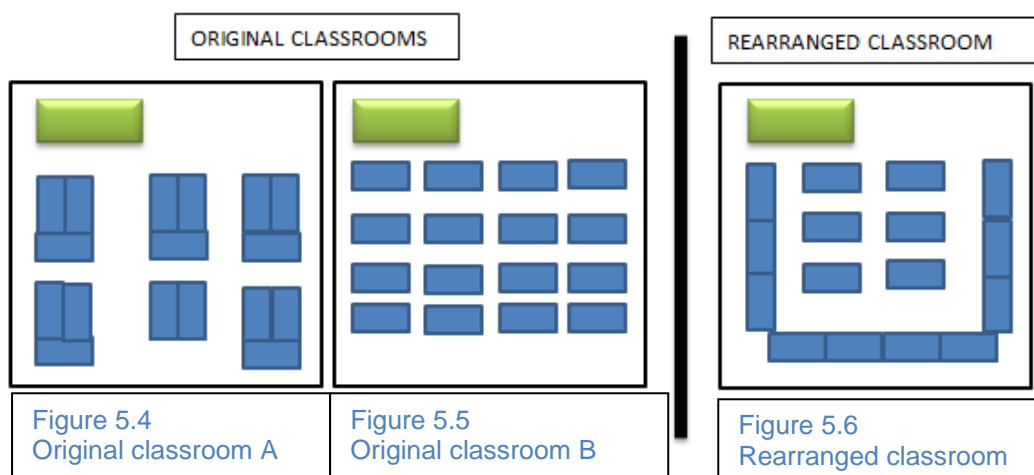
One learner went a step further showing how space now influenced her by evoking memories of her bedroom back at home. This is crucial as during the discussion Mrs Dlamini, when asked what a classroom is, responded saying it’s both a home and an office “because if the child is in a class they must feel at home. And it’s an office because we do work there” (Int., Dlamini, 27/10/15). The classroom now, for at least one learner, met this requirement.

Living in this reconceptualised space also brought about some unforeseen repercussions that were previously not existent in the initial space. One is the overwhelming reoccurrence of the colour green. In Eastland Primary the school exterior, the teacher’s desks, uniform, window frames, door frames and fence are all green and so having a classroom that is green for one learner in the group discussion is “too much”( COE4, SAY, 9/02/15). Extensive research has been done on the effects colour has on the mood, pointing to green as a calming, refreshing and harmonious colour (Eiseman, 2006; Kurt & Osueke, 2014). While this is not central to this research it may prove insightful in selecting a colour to paint classrooms or further research on how the firstspace material may constitute lived space.

### **5.2.2 Chairs And Desk: A Space To Be**

Below are images of the seating arrangements of 6B at the beginning of the research and at the end. In Eastland Primary, the original seating arrangement in the school placed learners in four rows of four desks where each desk seats two learners (see fig.5.5). When doing group work learners were seated in six groups of four to six learners (see fig.5.4).

During the intervention the class then adopted a U-shape seating arrangement with two rows of three in the centre (see figure.5.6).



This rearranged seating found favour from both learners and teachers both during and after the research. After the initial data collection the researcher returned to Eastland Primary and spoke to 135 learners in the Grade 7 year. 18 learners preferred the original seating arrangement and the majority of 117 learners preferred the U-shaped arrangement. This change was reflected in the broader school, after the three months, nine other classrooms had adopted the U-shaped seating with minor modifications in the larger classes. What is interesting are the various reasons teachers and learners present for their selection of the U-shaped seating arrangement in the interviews.

#### 5.2.2.1 Teachers and learners' experiences in transitioning to the U-shape seating arrangement

A teacher, Mrs Mnguni, who adopted the seating arrangement and Mrs Dlamini were asked to provide their thoughts on the seating arrangements after having taught in all three classrooms above (see figure 5.4-6 ). This is what they had to say during the interviews:

#### Teachers

R: Has there been any changes to teaching and learning?

Mrs Dlamini: The part of reading...

Remember the learners were sitting in groups facing each other. Now the arrangement makes it easy for the learners to see each other and

the moving is easier. The participation has changed they interact more. When I compare them to the other classes the changes that I've tried has not been as great (in terms of participation)... with the grade sixes even the whole school has adopted the same setting: grades 5/6/7 and even in the grade 2's in the foundation phase. With a bigger number, it is a problem. But in the classes that have used the same classroom setup, they used two rows instead of one. In grade 5 even the noise has gone down ma'am (A grade 5 teacher) is saying that teachers have even noticed a change in behaviour.

### **Interview with Mrs Mnguni**

R: I see you have adopted the same seating arrangement, has there been any difference?

Mrs Mnguni: Yes, this way is great for big classes because as you can see it makes it easy for the teachers to move around. All the grade 6 classes now use this way and even the grade 5 classes. The teacher who doesn't is new and so she has not been informed but she will do it too.

### **Learners**

R: Why do you prefer the U-shaped seating arrangement?

SV: because there is a lot of space for teachers and learners to move.

SAQ/SAS: This one has lots of space to move and clean

SAG: Sir there is more space

In the interviews with teachers and learners, we begin to see how what was initially a firstspace change, moving chairs around, results in several unanticipated ways of thinking and being as space constitutes the participants. The participants mentioned changes they witnessed in the classroom by merely rearranging the firstspace materials of the classroom. Firstly, both teachers and learners are able to easily move around the classroom. This means in a school like Eastland Primary less time is spent by learners walking to the bin, drinking water. Educators can now navigate easier in the classroom spaces during teaching and learning to fulfil the duties of checking learners work and behaviour as they enter the learners' space as opposed to speaking to them from afar (Int., Dlamini, 27/10/15; Int., Mnguni, 9/2/16; COE4, SAG/SAQ/SAS, 9/2/16). This is important because learning is personal and sometimes teachers and learners need interactions that are one-on-one and more intimate.

Secondly, Mrs Dlamini also helps us see how reading has been transformed. On numerous occasions during the observations, the learners read as a group or individually (obs., 27/10/15). The U-shaped seating arrangement now helps learners see each other during this event. This is good for two notable reasons: learners are better able to participate in whole class discussions and debates. Also, as mentioned in chapter 4 learners often steal from each other and had asked to have cameras to prevent this in the first and second COE (Group presentation, G3, 2015). The new arrangement creates a space for peer surveillance. Learners now can keep each other accountable. The power of a circle helps provide a systematic orchestration of learning that is more inclusive (Dixon, 2011).

Thirdly, the teachers note that participation has improved and so has the behaviour of the learners in classes where the U-shape arrangement is adopted. These two reasons, behaviour and participation, may also be due to the above to changes already mentioned, easier movement and learner surveillance (Dixon, 2011); learners may participate more because unlike before, the whole class can see who is talking and what is being said. This possibly was a reason for several other classes adopting the same seating.

Mrs Mnguni, a teacher who adopted the U-shape seating, also commented on how the seating arrangement is “great for big classes” (Int., Mnguni, 8/2/16) and Mrs Dlamini also commented on how two rows had been used in bigger classes forming two U’s instead of one. An image below shows how teachers adjusted the arrangement to meet the needs of bigger classes (see figure 5.7). This is included because in many township schools overcrowding is a norm (Clark & Linder, 2006). This seating arrangement can now seat the typical 2016 grade 6 classes in Eastland Primary with 43-46 learners and still provide the benefits mentioned above. This is not to say this is the best seating arrangement but instead to begin to look at other arrangements and what they make possible as we imagine new ways of doing and being.

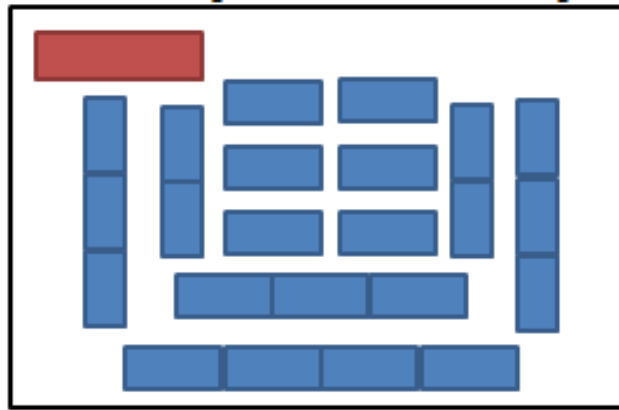


Figure 5.7 U shape seating with two rows forming the U

In several cases, the learners' input about the experiences in changing the seating arrangement to the U-shape was more novel than those provided by the teachers. One issue that was raised was about making the learning environment accessible: In the fourth COE a learner, signalling to the learner behind him who was shorter than he, stated that he preferred the U-shape because it allowed more people to see the board, unlike the current classroom where the learner behind him struggled to see past him (COE4, SW,8/2/16). This is because learners are usually seated alphabetically, to mix proficient learners with weaker learners or the learners seat themselves. In all three seating arrangements common to Eastland Primary the ability to see the board is not considered. The U-shape by forming a semi-circle enables more learners to see what is happening in front when compared to the traditional rows.

R: Why do you prefer the standard one?

SAH: When we are doing an activity that says make groups it is easier to make them,

SAR: It is more creative

The DBE (Department of Basic Education) books that prescribe lessons on several occasions require the learners to complete tasks in groups. According to the learners, the U-shaped seating arrangement also made it easier to convert the class into groups for the occasional group activity. One learner felt that this arrangement

was “more creative” (COE4, SAR, 9/2/16). Perhaps to cultivate creativity in learners we need to also let them occupy creative spaces to inspire creativity.

The impact of the firstspace changes in seating discussed resulted in new rituals and ways of being forming that manifested in secondspace that were previously limited or not possible. These rituals and ways of being include increased reading to classmates, learners keeping each other accountable, reduced levels of theft as learners see each other as the power of the circle is utilised, and teachers possibly having more productive group work because teachers and learners could communicate more easily. When other teachers adopted this firstspace change they had heard of the beneficial consequences and were prepared to change their classroom.

Power relations then experienced a shift as the reconceptualised classroom was adopted across the board. In a school where learners have little voice it was a change initiated by learners that was taken up by teachers in other classrooms. This is an instance of learners being taken seriously that proved to be mutually beneficial. This is a shift in how learners are constituted originally as being who girls clean and boys do not, to learners who listen and obey to learners who have something to contribute to the working of a school. This is also evident in discursive practices and the way in which the value of student input was reframed. The principal appreciated the learners’ input and desired to have the learners’ decisions implemented across the entire school (Int., Deputy/principle, 27/10, 15).

The seating arrangement thus constitutes learners and teachers by encouraging a more conducive and possibly more collaborative learning environment because more people can see each other during teaching and learning and not only can people see each other but they now can see the board easier. It encourages group work by reducing the time lost in converting the traditional row seating into groups. Initially, participants arranged desks the chairs and now the desks and chairs arrange teacher/teaching as well as learner/learning while potentially shifting power relations, and what appear to be the beginnings of a discourse that reflects this.

### **5.2.3 Learners Showing Better Recall of Posters**



The learners were interviewed at the end of the research and again after three months. During the interviews learners were asked about the several quotations on the walls of their classroom. This was done to see whether the learners could recall what they had selected and placed on the wall. Throughout the entire research, learners were not asked or required to remember the quotes placed on the wall. Below are the learners' responses:

R: Does anyone remember the quotes:

SAA: Nelson Mandela quote "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"

R: let's clap for her

SAB: "I can do it"

R: Well done!

SAC: "If you can change a classroom you can change a community and if you can change enough communities you can change the world"

R: Great!

R: Do you remember some of the quotes on the wall?

SA\BB: " I realised that if you can change classroom...community

SBC: "The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams" by Oprah Winfrey

SBD: "I can do it"

R: When last were you in that classroom?

SBD: last year sir in grade 6.

(COE4/9/2/16)

The learners were able to remember most of the educational quotations they had selected and placed on the wall. This took place when the learners had last been in the particular class for more than two months. These findings are amplified by the fact that learners struggled to recall any posters in the grade seven classrooms.

During two observed lessons, the learners appeared not to know what was on the classroom walls after six months of learning in space. The first instance is when Mrs Dlamini asked the learners what adjectives and adverbs were and there was no response (Obs., 29/9/15). The second instance was also during an English lesson when learners discussed the Buddhist life wheel of life that was mentioned in the DBE books in a story titled *The Day that David Died* once again learner knew very little about the wheel of life. Posters on both the wheel of life and the parts of speech stood on display on the classroom walls during both lessons (Obs., 30/09/15).

The firstspace posters placed on the wall by learners similar to the U-seating arrangement now having been utilised is rationalised in secondspace by the possibilities it presents in facilitating learner recall. It is possible that learners may have better recall in spaces they design or have both a 'say' and a 'buy in'. Further research needs to be done as this claim has very crucial implications on space and learning that may question the apparent norm of placing several posters on the four walls. (See also Harry Daniels (1989) who shows how all learners even those with learning disabilities are able through posters to understand social phenomena in the schooling environment.)

#### **5.2.4 A Greater sense of Community.**

'Community' is defined as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.9). This usually is evident when groups demonstrate trust, mutual interdependence among members, interactivity and strong feelings of connectedness (Bellah, Madison, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton, 1985; Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993).

In the redesign of the classroom, a sense of community was needed in learners demonstrating mutual dependency, interactivity and trust in designing and making their classroom. This was evident in the small groups completing their tasks, learners fetching other learners from home, learners making sure food was kept for learners who had left to buy paint/decorations and learners showing empathy towards learners walking long distances to school carrying heavy bags (Obs., 6/10/17). After redesigning the classroom space it appeared that social relations amongst learners strengthened as a greater sense of community became apparent as they began to live in space.

Mrs Dlamini noticed this in the interview at the end of the research as she said the following concerning the redesigned classroom and the learners "the changes you brought made a change in the learners... Now they feel like this is where they belong, even if they come before school they don't stand outside anymore they come

inside and clean the class and get ready for the first class.” (Int., Dlamini, 27/10/15). The principal and deputy provided similar information at the end of the research stating that “I’m so jealous [because the project was not done in her class or the entire school] ... the atmosphere... it makes the child want to come to the classroom” (Int., Principal& deputy,27/10/15).

After the fourth COE during walks around the school, a group of 8 learners sat on the floor in a passage created by two classrooms eating their lunch and sharing in conversation. Of the eight girls, only one girl was not from last year’s grade 6B class and as they sat she leant on the other side of the wall (see figure 5.8). In many cases once learners change classes they form new friends and spend less or no time with former classmates.

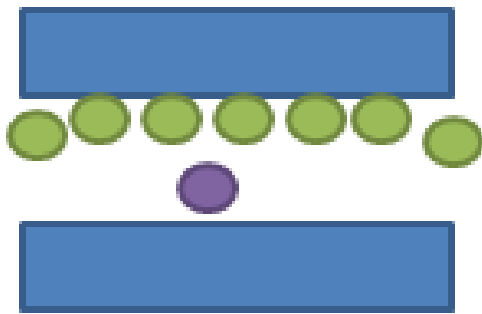


Figure 5.8: Classmates grouped together during break

The learners in last year’s 6B have been split into three grade seven classes and it appeared that perhaps a greater sense of connectedness still existed and this could be due to several reasons. One of the many reasons being the collaborative making of space as Doorley & Wittholt (2012) state that creating a space collaboratively is the best recipe for creating a collaborative space. This is because as learners take action in building the space both commitment and comradeship increase as a connection to space and each other develops in the invested owners (Doorley & Wittholt, 2012).

The greater sense of community that is evident in learners being connected after the research, learners spending free time together as a class in space and the positive atmosphere in the classroom. Contrasting these findings with the initial gendered and antagonistic relation apparent in 6B rife with theft this may be a step in the right

direction showing how space can and does constitute a sense of community. There were, however, negative findings recorded when learners began to live in space.

### **5.2.5 Resistance to the learners' Blog**

The learners' blog initiated at the beginning of the fourth term when schools reopened initially was utilised by the learners as they placed additional posters of celebrities and poetry done by a learner. Upon returned however the following year to see the progress with the new 6B this is what was discovered in the fourth COE;

R: When you arrived did the teacher tell you what is happening over there (the learners' Blog)

SJ: No (whole class)

R: So you know nothing about the learners' blog, you must ask the teacher about the learner's blog last year's grade used.

(CEO4, 8/2/16).

For reasons initially unknown the learners' blog had some photos placed there by the previous grade six class only and the educator, Mrs Ziba had not informed the new grade 6 learners. As a result, the class had not utilised the space in the classroom and it had thus been stopped from becoming ritual situated in secondspace. Over and above this all the other grade seven and six classrooms did not have a learners' blog amidst the overwhelming favour shown by the learners towards the intervention.

In Eastland Primary, 98% of all grade sevens and the entire new grade 6B are in favour of the learners' blog. The 2% opposing the idea did so because of two secondspace reasons rationalising why they accepted the absence of the blog: it may be a distraction and it might be used to insult other learners.

(CEO4,SS&SAU,8/2/16).The 98% provided the following reasons showing how space now constitutes the learners' being:

R: why do you like the learners' blog?

SAT: Makes you feel more comfortable in the classroom

SS: It encourages us and motivates us, Sir. :

R: How do they encourage you,

SS: because they [sportsmen and musician] are successful and we also want to be successful Sir.

(COE4, 8/2/16)

The firstspace material learners' blog had secondspace influence on the learners according to the data as it both encouraged/motivated and made the learners comfortable in the classroom (COE4, SAT/SS, 8/2/16). In conflict with the learners' desire Mrs, Ziba responded by asking "What will Somizi (a well-known celebrity the class had placed on the blog) do for you?"(26/10/15).

Although the learners' blog did not empower the learners as power is diffuse, embodied, enacted and everywhere (Foucault, 1998, p.93) it provided a firstspace ritualization for the expression of the already present power that embraces everything and is both productive and destructive. The teacher thus resists this power by withholding knowledge from the new grade sixes. After the fourth COE, a class of grade seven learners approached the teacher to plead for a learners' blog and the U-seating. Only the seating was approved. In discussions with the learners, they sought for a learners' blog to place a map and geographically locate the articles they were working with at the school. The ritualization provided by the learners was again resisted and the justification was not heard by the teacher. This results in the 'closing' of third space and a return to the legitimised routine.

### **5.2.6 Learners Pushback**

The increased sense of ownership, belonging and the invested interest held by the learners resulted in a pushback in teacher- learner relations as well as relations with other learners. By push back I refer to a negative or unfavourable reaction apparent in the research. The pushback resulted in learners now critiquing what they had previously taken for granted and the learners un/knowingly forming an elite group.

#### **5.2.6.1. Critiquing COE methodology**

Initially, the running of the COE's required that each learner selects any learner whose hand is outstretched (signalling they wanted to speak). In the first and second COE this was accepted by the learners but at the end of the intervention a learner interrupted and requested that boys select girls and girls select boys as a trend

developed where boys would select boys or girls would select girls. The rest of the class demanded that we voted on the matter and everyone was in favour of the way forward which was then adopted (COE3, S1, 27/10/15). This is one of the first signs of learners now challenging teacher/researcher authority and voicing out concerns.

#### **5.2.6.2. Learners Push Back: Questioning Teacher Authority**

Learners' comments from COE:

S6. What I don't like are the old classroom rules and the old posters

S7. The pictures of the food we also don't like because it makes us hungry.  
(COE3/27/10/15)

The second instance took place when we returned to the classroom space and the learners realised that several new posters had been placed in the classroom without their knowing and this is what the learners said to both the researcher and the educator. A learner pointing at a *2 minute noodle* poster stated that "the picture of food we also don't like because it makes us hungry."(COE3, S7,27/10/15) and then another learner pointing to the timetable that was previously in the class stated that "what I don't like are the old classroom rules and the old posters"(COE3, S6, 27/10/13).

Ironically with the previous posters teachers never sought the learners' approval and the old posters were initially in the classroom prior the changes. Now however in space, they had designed the learners began to push back the teacher's input and sought for valid reasons for the posters placed in their absence, something they did not do before. Learners wanted to play a role in deciding on changes made to the physicality of space.

Mrs Ziba in discussion during the fourth COE also mentioned how the new grade six class of over forty-five learners became very noisy in the U-shape seating as learners not only see each other but also now can communicate amongst each other. Interestingly this increased talk amongst learners is classified as problematic and troublesome.

Unlike the traditional rows in the U-shaped seating arrangement, the focal point is no longer the teacher in front but instead shared amongst learners and teacher as more than twenty learners face other peers and not the teacher. This challenges power relations as the traditional row facing the teacher can present the ideology that the only legitimate place to focus one's attention is on the teacher standing at the chalkboard and conceptualises the teacher as the only knower in secondspace where the teacher and the books symbolise knowledge (Manke, 1994). Students constantly find ways to resist organisational structures and the U-seating may be seen as a way of recognising learners as knowers in secondspace ideologies as it is no longer inconvenient to talk to a peer by having to turn one's body to make eye contact (Manke, 1994, p.19). Mrs Ziba still, however, conceptualises the increased communication as a push back from the deviant learners.

The push back challenged the previous norms in space. This is evident when the children went to the teacher to ask for a change in seating and to have a learners' blog (8/2/16). Although during the first interview learners applauded the fact that the classroom belong to them as well, later on in the research they began to act out the sense of belonging, voice and agency by utilising the power and agency they have seen having their decisions taken up by the school in requesting for a learners' blog and the U-shape seating. This is only considered a push back because teachers resist accepting having the blog but the U-seating finds favour in the site from all participants. Such actions (requesting a learners' blog/ a seating arrangement) are read as deviant behaviour in traditional settings where children as to be seen not heard.

#### **5.2.6.3. Learners' Push Back: Alienating Other Classes**

This new identity assumed by 6B in the research, in increasing the level of community, resulted in alienating the other classrooms that remain unchanged. The learners in 6B in the third COE were asked to comment on the responses they received from peers in other classes and had the following to say:

R: How do your friends feel that are not in this particular class?

- S1. They are jealous
- S2. They are unhappy cause they don't like how other classes were not decorated
- S3. They wish they could remove us from the classroom and learn here
- S4. They feel like the class is childish
- S5. They are angry
- S6. They are troubled/ frustrated/ envious

In the course of the research and learning in the new classroom 6B, in developing a sense of community, were perceived or perceived themselves as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which they exist. This brought about feelings of jealousy, unhappiness, anger and frustration from other classes. The fourth COE that included learners who had not participated in the reconceptualisation showed that this jealousy is caused by learners feeling left out in the process of designing their own classroom. Learners envied the process and not the actual classroom as they wished to have their own unique space (COE4, SAZ, /8/2/16). Occasionally during the COE learners from the other classes would interrupt to ask if they too would also have their classroom decorated in hopes of being included in the reconceptualisation (COE4, SAI, 8/2/16). I intentionally end with this as it shows how in future if space is to be reconceptualised, one needs to be mindful of how firstspace alterations may result in isolating learners from the whole.

At the beginning of this chapter, we started looking at how the firstspace physicality of spatiality was redesigned. What became evident is that the changes were presented because of thoughts operating in secondspace that justified the changes. Also, however because the redesign was a thirdspace moment that became secondspace as it was ritualised and adopted across the school may of the secondspace justifications only became apparent once participants lived in space. Overall this is what is at the heart of the data. Learners redesigned the classroom with a strong desire to be part of the school. The seating arrangement resulted in changes to teachers and learners that were largely beneficial to all. Questions are also raised about how learners demonstrated better recall in the spaces they had both a 'say' and 'buy in' in.

Space also, however, constituted the learners in a disadvantageous manner as learners began to show resistance to the research methodology and teacher



authority both of which proved advantageous as both the research methodology and teaching was improved. Learners did, however, become alienated from other learners. This said the most notable change is the greater sense of community demonstrated by learners due to the research that greatly benefits teaching and learning.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research by looking at the research findings. The focus is on discussing the benefits and challenges experienced when teachers and learners collaboratively reconceptualise space. This chapter firstly considers the benefits of reconceptualising space to make an argument that the reconceptualisation of classroom space was worthwhile. Secondly, foregrounding the challenges experienced when reconceptualising space may help pre-empt the possible challenges for other reconceptualisations.

The research began looking at the spatial relations in the original classroom. The relations were structured and governed by space working closely with time. Girls and boys had antagonistic relations and classroom layout was used to control bodies in space. Theft was normalised leaving learners feeling unsafe. As the learners and teacher redesigned space learners showed signs of wanting to belong as they utilised agency and voice to imagine new way of doing and being. Once teaching and learning took place in the redesigned space the learners and teacher witnessed new possibilities such as better navigation through the space, and learner -to-learner accountability. Learners also showed better signs of recall in the redesigned spaces. There were however, also signs of alienation from the other learners from other classes and a teacher noting that learners in the redesigned classroom were harder to manage as power shifted in the research.

I now briefly mention the challenges and benefits at a micro level and go into depth discussing macro challenges and benefits presented by the findings.

#### **6.1. The challenges experienced when reconceptualising space collaboratively.**

The micro challenges are focused on the classroom space that was reconceptualised in Eastland Primary. In order to carry out a reconceptualisation of classroom space both time and finances provide a challenge. They both influence

how far the reconceptualisation can go. The reconceptualisation had to take place during the school holidays and still ensure that learners and teachers are rested for the following school term. The imagined classroom design was also hindered by the budget made available and so several worthwhile redesign requests had to be overlooked that may have strengthened the findings in the data.

After the redesign learners started to critique how teachers worked with the classroom seeking to have a say in future changes to the space. These learners started to talk more with their peers during teaching. As a result some teachers found managing the learners harder as shifts in power in the democratised spaces enabled learner to utilise agency and voice, something seldom done in traditional setting.

Lastly, the strong traditional pedagogy and the hierarchical relations (Foucault, 1977) between teachers and learners proved challenging as learners, in the presence of teachers, often repressed their thoughts and opinions. Group discussions and COEs with teachers were far less interactive and learners did not speak freely.

At the macro level the challenges went beyond 6B and at times even Eastland Primary. The scalability of the research is essentially a challenge and it raises questions about how it could be carried out in the entire school and/ or in more than one school. In such a situation the reconceptualisation would provide several challenges with numerous teachers with differing views and ideas operating in secondspace that define what a classroom is, what teaching and learning is may create conflict. If reconceptualisation takes place in the entire school or many schools all the participants need to view the entire process as worthwhile amidst the overwhelming paperwork, meetings, training workshops and union militancy.

Further research is needed to explore how such a spatial reconceptualisation can be carried out on a larger scale as well as what might be done differently to make the project efficient. Should it be spearheaded by researchers in universities working with teachers or do the teachers spearhead the project and how much time and finance do we allocate to it? Will it be equally effective in the hand of teachers and/or researchers? Are schools prepared to have their learners heard and have differing

classrooms or are institutions too entrenched in the traditional education that treats teaching like an industrial line where the goal is uniformity and conformity? Do we create platforms for teachers and learners to collaborate during the building of new schools so that more architectural possibilities are made available? The nature of the COE also may provide a challenge as it has the potential to democratise space and shift power relations when facilitated well. Are teachers however able to well facilitate COE? These are all some of the questions that need to be answered.

Having looked at the scale we then need to look at the sustainability of the project. Sustainability is challenging for two reasons. Firstly, in Eastland Primary having completed the redesign four months later the learners' blog had been discontinued by teachers although a large number of learners sought to keep it. This may imply that while the research gives learners' agency and voice a platform after the research there is a tendency to go back to previously established norms. This is because the project works with thirdspace moments known to be unstable having a fluid nature. Thirdspace constantly opens up and closes in space (Lefebvre, 1991). The learners' blog initially opened up new possibilities and later when it was discontinued closed possibilities. Can the findings over time be both maintained and increased? This may need us to examine how well the projected is received by teachers and principals because shifts in special relations result in shifts in knowledge and power that may be seen as by teachers and principals as disruptive.

The last challenge discussed at the macro level is inclusion and exclusion during and after the reconceptualisation. At Eastland Primary, the reconceptualisation of 6B's classroom excluded other learners who later felt alienated from what looked like an elite group of learners who redesigned their own classroom. Uniting the learners in 6B resulted in distancing them from the whole. What is interesting, however, is that learners in 6B who could not make the four days of redesign were well received in the classroom and still formed part of 6B. Learners and teachers need not partake in all the processes to be part of the reconceptualisation. This may prove helpful in creating inclusivity in and through reconceptualisations. Nonetheless, this still provides a challenge in redesigning classrooms that represent unique learners in classrooms. Careful thought needs to go into the decision making so that we all, as Mrs Dlamini stated, feel at home in the classroom (Int., Dlamini, 27/10/15).

## **6.2. The benefits experienced when reconceptualising space collaboratively.**

The micro benefits discussed in the research directly related to 6B are the increased participation from active learners, increased responsibility from learners, more critical teaching, a stronger sense of ownership and belonging in space as well as voice and agency from learners involved in the reconceptualisation.

The opportunities made available in dysfunctional schools, an increased sense of community and learners as a resource can be seen to operate at a macro level. Eastland Primary is a relatively functional school with some signs of dysfunction mentioned in the research like the mismanagement of time from teachers and learners. The signs of dysfunction proved helpful in the success of the plethora reconceptualisation. The boundaries are more fluid and open up possibilities to do interesting and creative work.

This is not to say that dysfunction should be encouraged. The reality is, however, many of the schools in South Africa show some signs of dysfunction (Taylor, 2008) and what is being encouraged is utilising the already present conditions to imagine new ways of doing and being.

At the heart of the research, I argue is how the redesign of classroom and learning in space resulted in a greater sense of community amongst learners. The relations amongst participants developed as they painted, shared meals and sat in a semi-circle during lessons etc. Learners who initially had antagonistic gendered relations started showing signs of empathy, spent free time together and as a whole embraced their new identity as 6B.

The reconceptualisation shows learner's insights and experiences are novel and need to be included in the day-to-day running of schools. In several moments, both teachers and the researcher were astonished by what learners noticed in their different yet refreshing perspectives. Amidst all the talks of new schools being built, we need to let learners play a role in the processes of establishing new schools.

Finally, the research sample is small, as is common to case studies, and so the findings are not generalizable. What is noteworthy, however, is how small changes when worked with systematically are able to shift identities over time. This project makes a small contribution into the growing body of work that begins to show the possibilities of taking space seriously in educational research.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Allen, R.L. (1999). The socio-spatial making and marking of "us": towards a critical postmodern spatial theory of difference and community. *Social Identities*, 5(3), 249-277.
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the heart: individualism and commitment in American life*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). Education cannot compensate for society In B.R. Cosin, I.R. Dale, G. M. Esland and D. F. Swift (eds.) (The School and Society Course Team, The Open University) (Eds.), *School and Society: A sociological Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. (1986). On pedagogic discourse. In J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Brainerd, C. J., & Reyna, V. F. (2005). *The science of false memory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Christie, P. (1991). *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa*. Johannesburg: SACHED/Ravan. Revised and Expanded Edition.
- Christie, P. (2012). *Framing the field of affordances: space, place and social justice in education in South Africa*. Paper prepared for the international seminar on Space, Place and Social Justice in Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, 13 July 2012.
- Clark, J., & Linder, C. J. (2006). *Changing teaching, changing times: Lessons from a South African township science classroom*. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th Edition). London and New York: Routledge.
- Culican, S.J. (2005). *Troubling Teacher Talk: The challenge of changing classroom discourse patterns*, Catholic Education Office: Melbourne.
- Daniels, H. (1989). Visual Displays as Tacit Relays of the Structure of Pedagogic Practice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 10(2), 123-140.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (1998). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). *The qualitative research interview*. *Medical education*, 40(4), 314-321.

- Dixon, K, & Dornbrack, J.(2016). Dead-Lines: Teachers' Bureaucratic Habitus and Disciplinary Writing in Three South African Schools. In G. Enriquez, E. Johnson, S. Kontovourki & C. Mallozzi (Eds.), *Literacies, learning, and the body: Putting theory and research into pedagogical practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Dixon, K. (2007) A Space to Write: the construction of the writing subject in early schooling. *English Academy Review Special Edition on Language and Identity* 24 (2) pp. 85-101.
- Dixon, K. (2011). *Literacy, power, and the schooled body: learning in time and space*. New York: Routledge.
- Doorley, S., & Witthoft, S. (n.d.). *Make space: How to set the stage for creative collaboration*.
- Eiseman L. (2006). *Color: Messages and meanings—A Pantone color resource*. Gloucester, MA: Hand Books Press Distributed by North Light Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The birth of a prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (2000) *Ethics, subjectivity and truth: essential works of Foucault 1954–1984. Vol. 1* New York: The New Press.
- Gaventa, J. (2003). *Power after Lukes: A review of the literature*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- Haynes, J & K. Murris (2013) (Eds.) Child as Educator. Special Issue: *Studies in Philosophy of Education*. Vol 32 (3) May 2013.
- Kurt, S., & Osueke, K. (2014). The Effects of Color on the Moods of College Students. *Sage Open*, 4(1), pp.2-12. Retrieved from <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/4/1/2158244014525423.abstract>
- Leander, K. M., Phillips, N. C., & Taylor, K. H. (2010). The Changing Social Spaces of Learning: Mapping New Mobilities [Abstract]. *Review of Research in Education*, 34(1), 329-394.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre, H. (2004) *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life*. Trans. S. Elden & G. Moore. London: Continuum.
- Manke, M. (1994). *Teacher organization of time and space in the classroom as an aspect of the construction of classroom power relationships*. Paper presented at the



annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from ERIC database.

McMillan, D.W., & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6-23.

Moje, E.B.(in press). Powerful Spaces: Tracing the out of school literacy spaces of Latino/a youth. In K. Leander & M. Sheehy (Eds.), *Space matters: Assertions of space in literacy practice and research*. New York: Peter Lang.

Montessori, M., & George, A. E. (1964). *The Montessori method*. New York: Schocken Books.

Robinson, K. (2009). *Do schools kill creativity?* (n.d.). Retrieved Marc 26, 2015, from [http://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity)

Rose, D. (2003a) *Preparing for Reading: Teacher Resource Book 1*. Faculty of Education: University of Sydney.

Schmid, C. (2008). Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: Towards a three dimensional dialectic. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgram, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. New York: Routledge.

Shaffer, C., & Anundsen, K. (1993). *Creating community anywhere*. New York: Perigee.

Sheehy, M. (2009). *Place Stories: Time, Space and Literacy in Two Classrooms*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace. Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-Imagined-Places*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Strong-Wilson, T & Ellis,J (2007). *Children and Place: Reggio Emilia's Environment As Third Teacher, Theory Into Practice*. London: Routledge.

Taylor, N. (2008), *What's wrong with South African schools? Presentation to the Conference What's Working in School Development*, JET Education Services, 28-29 February 2008.

Taylor, N. (2011). *Priorities for addressing South Africa's education and training crisis: A review commissioned by the National Planning Commission*. Johannesburg: JET Education Services.

The World Bank. (2014.).*Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

Thrift, N. (2006) *Space. Theory, Culture and Society*, 23(2-3):139-155

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Wicklund Pigozi, O., & Mau, B. (2010). *The third teacher: 79 ways you can use design to transform teaching & learning*. New York: Abrams.

## APPENDICES

- A. Letter to the school principal
- B. Letter to the learners
- C. Letter to parents
- D. Letter to the teacher
- E. Teacher's Consent Form
- F. Parent's Consent Form
- G. Learner Consent Form
- H. Principal Consent Form
- I. Interview schedule: teacher
- J. Interviews Photo elicitation
- K. Observation protocol
- L. Community Of Enquiry
- M. Homeroom teacher interview questions and transcript
- N. Teacher Interview question and transcript
- O. Follow-up teacher interview/s
- P. COE 1-4 transcripts

## **Appendix A: Letter to school principal**

DATE

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi. I am an M.ED student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently undertaking my M.ED research project.

I would like to invite your school to participate in this research which I hope will add to the knowledge in our field of work and also be interesting to both you and those involved. The reason why I have chosen your school is because I believe it is rich in diversity and is a government school which teaches grade six learners English and has an English teacher I would love to work with. Working closely with the teacher we shall ensure this does not infringe upon the learners learning.

I am doing research on: Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom

The purpose of the research project is to explore how classroom space can be used as an educational resource by both teachers and learners collaboratively. In the research I intend to spend a total of four week on the school premises for 2 hours a day. In the first week I would like to sit in the English lesson offered to grade sixes by one of your English teacher simply to observe and take notes of the teaching and learning. During this time I would also like the permission to attend assemblies and walk around the school to get a feel of the school ethos. With the supervision of the teacher the learners and I will collaboratively discuss the use of class room spaces.

In the second and third week I would then like to have the teacher and the learners to collaboratively redesign a classroom democratically and create that classroom and work in it for the whole week. This will not require any resources other than those that are already present. Once classroom spaces have been designed I will also sit in the lessons to observe learning and teaching. This will be repeated the following week to make changes or improvements to the classroom they designed. After this I would then like to interview the teacher and some learners from this class, at times most convenient to them.

Throughout the 4 weeks I would like to spend in your school I will collect data via observation sheets photos of the empty classroom , video recordings, and an interview about the process with the teacher and some of the learners. In all this the learners, teacher and school's identity will not be revealed, pseudonyms will be used and faces and any signs revealing the school will be blurred.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They and the school will be reassured that you can withdraw at any time and have their input excluded from the published work without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. Participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will kept in a secure locker and then it will be destroyed 4 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely

SIGNATURE:

Nkosikhona Sean nkosi  
41 Service road  
Pollack park  
Springs  
Email: [sean.nkosi@yahoo.com](mailto:sean.nkosi@yahoo.com)  
0724770404

## **Appendix B: Letter to school learners**

### **INFORMATION SHEET LEARNERS**

Dear Learner

My name is Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi. I am a M.ED student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on:

My research involves finding out how you and your English teacher can design classroom spaces together. I also want to see how teaching and learning may take place in the classroom spaces you have designed.

I was wondering whether you would give me some of your time to start this discussion. I would like to spend time with you in your English periods for the next 4 weeks. I need your help with discussing how you feel about classrooms and drawing your own classrooms. We will then vote for one that we can make and work in it during the English class.

Through the four weeks I will be observing your English lessons and making some notes. To help me I will also video record your lessons so that I have them with me at home. In all the video recordings I will blur your faces and ensure that nobody sees the videos except my supervisor and myself. I may also request an interview with you. I will record all interviews but will still make sure no one knows that what you said was said by you.

Remember, this is not a test, it is not for marks and it is voluntary, which means that you don't have to do it. Also, if you decide halfway through that you prefer to stop, this is completely your choice and will not affect you negatively in any way. If you do wish to stop then I will not mention or use anything you have said or done in my work.

I will not be using your own name but I will make one up so no one can identify you. All information about you will be kept confidential in all my writing about the study. Also, all collected information will be stored safely in a secure locker and be destroyed 4 years after I have completed my project.

I am also hoping we have fun doing this and that you feel comfortable as we get to know each other.

Your parents or guardians have also been given an information sheet and consent form, but at the end of the day it is your decision to join us in the study.

I look forward to working with you!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

SIGNATURE

Nkosikhona Sean nkosi  
41 Service road  
Pollack park  
Springs  
Email: sean.nkosi@yahoo.com  
0724770404

## **Appendix C: Letter to school parents**

### **INFORMATION SHEET PARENTS**

DATE

Dear Parent

My name is Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi. I am a M.ED student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on: Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom.

My research involves me sitting down with your child with their classmates and English teacher for four weeks. We shall be talking about how they feel about classroom spaces and what they feel a classroom is for and how best they can be designed. I would also like to have your child in a group designing a classroom and then vote for their best classrooms. The classroom that wins the most votes will then be used for two weeks of teaching. I may also interview your child about this experience.

The reason why I have chosen your child's class is because they are in grade six and have a lot to say because of their experiences and knowledge of school classrooms. I would like to ask for your permission to engage in discussion with your child.

If I interview your child I will audiotape it so that I may later analyze it. I may also video record the teaching that takes place in the four weeks. All faces on the video will be blurred. Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. S/he will be reassured that s/he can withdraw her/his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your child will not be paid for this study. I am not interested in your child's academic performance or participation in school.

Your child's name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. His/her individual privacy will be maintained in all published written and presented data resulting from the study. This is because I will use pseudonyms throughout the research. I will also work closely with your child's English teacher so that we both may do our best to ensure your child's best interests.

All research data will be destroyed 4 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.  
Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE



Nkosikhona Sean nkosi  
41 Service road  
Pollack park  
Springs  
Email: [sean.nkosi@yahoo.com](mailto:sean.nkosi@yahoo.com)  
0724770404

## **Appendix D:** Letter to school teacher

### INFORMATION SHEET TEACHERS

DATE

Dear NAME

My name is Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi. I am a M.ED student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on: Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project that will take about four weeks to complete.

The reason why I have chosen you for the research project is because you are an experienced English teacher who is currently teaching grade 6 English. I also believe that you are the best person to conduct my research with, provided you approve, because you are currently not sharing your classroom with any other subject or teacher. This gives you more control over the classroom.

I am interested in how classroom space can be a third teacher rather than just a setting. Initially I would like to spend time in your English classroom observing teaching and learning for the first week. At the end of the week I would like to facilitate a community of enquiry with you and the grade 6 English learners. During this time we would discuss what the purpose of a classroom is. After this then we shall, after looking at various images of classroom, break up into groups and have each group design a classroom space that they would like to learn/teach in the following week. Once this is done the class will vote for their favourite design and we shall recreate the design for the following weeks teaching and learning.

To do this and ensure it does not interfere with other classes we will also democratically select a learner to be the classroom monitor and with the help of other learners ensure that class is setup prior to teaching and learning and that for the following class with different learners that the classroom is suitable for leaning.

After a week of teaching in the classroom that has been democratically selected. I would like the class to have another community of enquiry. This time we shall discuss the challenges faced and the benefits of working in the space. To end the discussion we shall then redesign a classroom as an improvement on the previous classroom. Once again the monitor will ensure that the classroom is ready for week number three.

I would like this to have as little disruption to you as possible. I would like to support you in planning your teaching in the new spaces if you feel you would like this. I would like to interview you at the end of the project to find out about your opinions on the process and how it made you think about your pedagogy. This will be audio taped and it will take 20 minutes at a time that is convenient to you.

Data will be collected through observation notes that I will be taking throughout my four weeks in your classroom space. I will also be using a video recorder to record both teaching and learning so that I can analyse it later. In the video footage all faces will be blurred. The usage of the video recorder is to ensure that I have records of both the verbal and non-verbal communication as well as the usage of the space. All data collected will be kept confidential and will only be seen by myself and my supervisor.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing in the project. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be kept in a secure locker and then destroyed 4 years after completion of the project.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.  
Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Nkosikhona Sean Nkosi  
41 Service Road  
Pollack park  
Springs  
Email: sean.nkosi@yahoo.com  
0724770404

## Appendix E: Learner Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called:  
*Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom*

\_\_\_\_\_

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

### Permission to take part in this study

I agree to participate in this study and know that I can withdraw at any time YES/NO

### Permission to observe you in class

I agree to be observed in class. YES/NO

### Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

### Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

### Permission to be videotaped

I agree to be videotaped in class. YES/NO

I know that the videotapes will be used for this project only and my YES/NO

Face will not be shown.

### Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotaped
- the findings from the research project may be used in academic conferences and/or published.

Sign\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix F: Parent's Consent Form**

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent of \_\_\_\_\_

### **Permission for my child to take part in the study**

**Circle one**

I give permission for my child to take part in this study

YES/NO

### **Permission to observe my child in class**

I agree that my child may be observed in class.

YES/NO

### **Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree that my child may be audiotaped during interview or observations.

YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only

YES/NO

### **Permission to be interviewed**

I agree that my child may be interviewed for this study.

YES/NO

I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and doesn't have to answer all the questions asked.

YES/NO

### **Permission to be videotaped**

I agree my child may be videotaped in class.

YES/NO

I know that the videotapes will be used for this project only.

YES/NO

### **Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my child's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that his/her name and the name of the school will not be revealed.
- he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- he/she can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.
- the findings from the research project may be used in academic conferences and/or published.

Sign\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Teacher's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called *Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom*

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent for the following:

**Permission to participate in this study**

I agree to participate in this study.

**Circle one**

YES/NO

**Permission to observe you in class**

I agree to be observed in class.

YES/NO

**Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lessons

YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only

YES/NO

**Permission to be interviewed**

I agree to be interviewed for this study.

YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.

YES/NO

**Permission to be videotaped**

I agree to be videotaped in class.

YES/NO

I know that the videotapes will be used for this project only.

YES/NO

**Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school and learners will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotaped
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.
- the findings from the research project may be used in academic conferences and/or published.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: Principal's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called *Space in a Grade 6 English Classroom*

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent for the following:

### Permission to observe an English class in your school.

I agree to have a classroom be observed for the duration of the research. YES/NO

### Permission to be audiotaped interviews conducted with learners and a teacher.

I grant permission for teachers and learners to be audio taped for this study, provided they also provide consent. YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

### Permission to be interview a teacher and learners

I would like grant permission for teachers and learners to be interviewed for this study, provided they also provide consent.. YES/NO

### Permission to be videotaped an English classroom

I agree have a classroom to be videotaped in my school. YES/NO

I know that the videotapes will be used for this project only. YES/NO

### Informed Consent

I understand that:

- the name of my school, and names of the Grade 6 teacher, and learners will be kept confidential.
- The teacher and learners do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.
- They can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.
- the findings from the research project may be used in academic conferences and/or published.

Sign\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix I: Teacher/learner interview schedule

## Interview Schedule for teacher and learners

Date :	Time :
--------	--------

Please add in when you would like any coffee/lunch breaks

Please add in when you would like any coffee/tea breaks						
Candidate/ Participants	Week	Start time *	End time *	Location *	Interview focus	
		Duration 30-45min				
Teacher	1				Discussion and briefing about the entire project and confirming venue.	
Teacher and learners				English classroom	COE1	
Teacher	2				Planning the lessons with the created classroom in mind. Discussing pedagogy matters and any issues brought by teacher/ researcher.	
Teacher and learners	2			English classroom	COE2	
Teacher	3				Planning the lessons with the created classroom in mind. Discussing pedagogy matters and any issues brought by teacher/ researcher Getting a sense of how the past week has been for the teacher.	
Teacher and learners	3			English classroom	CO3	
Teacher	3				Summative interview looking at the entire three weeks of data	

					collection.
Learners (focus group)	3			English classroom	Summative interview looking at the entire three weeks of data collection.

- In the first meeting the start time will be discussed so that times that both teacher and researcher are accommodated. Location will also be provided by the teacher. Any place where both the teacher and researcher are able to talk freely. Duration of interviews will be 30-45 minutes and can be spread out and need not be all at once. Learner interviews will also be during a period or during breaks

#### **NB**

Due to the nature of the research unplanned informal interviews may take place with teacher or learners provided consent is provided and this can be before or after school. Time will be managed strictly to ensure that both parties are not inconvenienced and participation will be voluntary

## Appendix J: Interview Photo elicitation

### Learner interview questions

***This will be done at the beginning after the researcher has observed the teaching and learning for a week.***

Learners will be shown various classroom images e.g.



Photo elicitation learner interviews:



Discussions will be directed by what learners find interesting in each picture.

The following are simply there to guide or prompt discussions:

1. What I liked about the classroom?
2. What I did not like about the classroom?

***These questions will be asked at the end of the three weeks***

3. What I liked about the classroom?
  4. What I did not like about the classroom?
  5. Any other matters that arise. (these matters will be given to the CSM anonymously and read out and then discussed)
1. Small groups
    - a. What have you enjoyed about the classroom activity?
    - b. What have you least enjoyed about the classroom activity?
    - c. Have you learnt anything about classroom space/ teaching / learning etc.?
    - d. What, if anything would you do differently if you could repeat the last four weeks?
    - e. Have you had any challenges?

The discussion will be open ended and seek to hear the participants experiences

## Appendix K: Observation protocol

### Detailed observation template

**All happenings in the class will be recorded to provide a wealth of data and then will be re written on the Classroom Observation write-up Form**

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Time:

\_\_\_\_\_


## Classroom Observation write-up Form

Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and

Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Use criteria that apply to format of course observed.**

Review Section	Description/Comments
1. <b>SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT</b>	
2. <b>PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF CLASSROOM IN ISOLATION</b> (state location and physical attributes of classroom, number of students in attendance, layout of room, distractions if any; list any observations of how physical aspects affected content delivery))	
3. <b>TEACHER'S INTERACTION OR USAGE OF CLASSROOM</b> (how is the usage of space functioning as a tool or a distraction, is/how the pedagogy working with the spatiality, movement of bodies)	
4. <b>LEARNERS' INTERACTION OR USAGE OF CLASSROOM</b> (how is the usage of space functioning as a tool or a distraction, is/how the learning working with the spatiality, movement of bodies)	
5. <b>FIRSTSPACE</b> (various routines and rituals in the class and social practices in and outside of the classroom)	
6. <b>TEACHING DISCOURSE AND SECONDSPEACE</b> (how is the teachers discourse during, prior and after teaching. Rationalizing of the firstspace )	

Review Section	Description/Comments
<b>7. LEARNING DISCOURSE AND SECONDSPACE</b> (The learners' discourse during, prior and after teaching. Rationalizing of the firstspace )	
<b>8. THIRDSPACE</b> (interruptions of the rhythm by teacher and/or learners, what happens how it is received or rejected)	
<b>9. TEACHER SENSITIVITY TO SPACE</b> (pro-active learning environment and an ongoing working with space in teaching)	
<b>10. LEARNER SENSITIVITY TO SPACE</b> (pro-active learning environment and an ongoing working with space in teaching)	
<b>11. OTHER</b>	

**Strengths observed:**

**Suggestions for improvement:**

**Overall impression of teaching and learning in space:**

## Appendix L: Community of enquiry protocol

Community of enquiry protocol	
<p><b>Purpose of the Community of enquiry Protocol:</b></p> <p>The community of enquiry provides a structured process for discussion. It is important to stress that Community of enquiry is <i>not</i> evaluative; the protocol provides a vehicle for democratic deliberation where all participants can be heard, and provides them with an opportunity to learn from each other. Because the Community of enquiry is intended to be 30-40 minutes in length, it is recommended that a period be set aside for the COE provided the class can still manage to complete all required work and the teacher is in agreement.</p>	
<p><b>Overview: Rules for COE Learners and teacher with the researcher will be seated in a circle for an open discussion.</b></p> <p><b>All members will be informed what the rules for the community of enquiry are prior to starting the COE.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All members in the COE are equal in the discussion and encouraged to engage in the discussion.</li> <li>2. When a member of the COE would like to express their thought to the group they will stretch their hand toward the centre of the group and wait for the member that is currently speaking to hand over the 'speaking right' by noting them.</li> <li>3. While a member is speaking the other members must remain quiet.</li> <li>4. Sufficient time must be given to participants to think about questions or engage with resources made available during the COE.</li> <li>5. At no point may one person take control or dominate the discussion.</li> <li>6. Any member at any point in the COE is welcome to excuse themselves by silence or exiting the circle.</li> </ol>	
Protocol Community of enquiry no. one	
<p><b>Step 1</b> <b>Discussion focus</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a classroom?</li> <li>Who does the classroom belong to?</li> <li>If you could change the current classroom what would you do and why?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2</b> <b>Photo elicitation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Images of various classrooms will be shown to the COE to elicit a response. The focus will be on the strengths and weaknesses of the various classroom arrangements and the learning and teaching that may take place in such a classroom. This also serves to provide the participants with an extensive view of classrooms</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b> <b>Small group discussion and class creation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The class will divide into small groups of about five.</li> <li>Participants will be asked to sketch their ideal classroom for next week.</li> <li>The classroom must relate to the work that is to be done (i.e English)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b> <b>Presenting classrooms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class will sit again in a circle as one unit</li> <li>Each group will present their classroom and briefly discuss why they would like such a classroom.</li> <li>The class will then vote for the class to be created for next week. (the sketch with the most votes wins)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 5</b> <b>Implementation</b></p>	<p><u>Classroom Space Monitors CSM</u> The class will select a CSM who will manage the setup of the classroom so that the class</p>

<b>And selection of Classroom space monitors</b>	<p>is setup prior to learning and that the following classes find the classroom in a workable fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This will be done through learners nominating themselves and then having two learners selected by the participants. To ensure fairness the voting will be done while the nominees are outside of the classroom.</li> <li>▪ All issues arising in the space will be handed to the CMS anonymously by being placed in the box provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Second Community of enquiry at the end of week two</b>	
<b>Step 1 Reflective discussion</b>	<p>The class will form a COE again at the end of the second week and then discuss the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What I liked about the classroom?</li> <li>2. What I did not like about the classroom?</li> <li>3. Any other matters that arise. (these matters will be given to the CSM anonymously and read out and then discussed)</li> </ol>
<b>Step 2 Small group discussion</b>	<p>Small groups</p> <p>The Class will then divide into small groups of about five again. Participants will be asked to sketch an improved classroom for next week's work or mention what they would like to change about the classroom and why.</p>
<b>Step 4 Presenting classrooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Class will sit again in a circle as one unit</li> <li>▪ Each group will present their improved classroom and briefly discuss why they would like to suggest the various changes.</li> <li>▪ The class will then vote for the classroom that will be created for next week's learning and teaching. (the sketch/ improvements with the most votes wins)</li> <li>▪ The classroom must also relate to next week's work</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4 implementation</b>	The CSM will then privately look at how and when the changes will be implemented.
<b>Final Community of enquiry at the end of the research project</b>	
<b>Step 1 Reflective discussion</b>	<p>What have you enjoyed about the classroom activity?</p> <p>What have you least enjoyed about the classroom activity?</p> <p>Have you learnt about classroom space/ teaching / learning etc.?</p> <p>What, if anything would you do differently if you could repeat the last four weeks?</p> <p>Have you had any challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The discussion will be open ended and seek to hear the participants experiences</li> </ul>
Where necessary both learner/s and teacher will have an opportunity to talk with the researcher separately. This is so that both parties are free to express their views.	



## Appendix M: Teacher interview question

<i>The interview shall be semi-structured and so the following questions are primarily to guide the discussion.</i>
<b>TEACHER BACKGROUND</b>
How long have you been teaching for?
How long have you been teaching at this particular school?
Question 3: What subjects/s and grades do you teach?
Are you the only teacher that uses this classroom space?
How long have you been teaching in this classroom?
<b>UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH CLASSROOM SPACE</b>
What do you think the purpose of a classroom is?
Would you consider the classroom as a home or an office or both? Please elaborate?
How often do you rearrange the classroom? What does this consist of?
The rearranging, who would it involve?
What has been your experience of participating in this project?
What do you think worked well?
What didn't work well?

Did the project alter your pedagogy? If yes how?
Has this changed how you see space? Why?
Has your role as a teacher been impacted upon? Why
What has stood out for you in the project and why?

**Appendix N: Teacher Follow up interview**

Semi-structured interview
How long have you been teaching for?
How long have you been teaching at this particular school?
Question 3: What subjects/s and grades do you teach?
Talk to me about the classroom space that functions as your homeroom class

**Appendix O: Homeroom Teacher Interview**

Semi-structured interview
1. Having adopted the seating arrangement from 6B of 2015 what are some of the observable changes you have noticed?

## Appendix P : COE transcripts

Community of Enquiry NO: 1

After seating the participants in a circle the researcher then read the rules of the CEO

**R: The are the rules for our talk**

- All members in the COE are equal in the discussion and encouraged to engage in the discussion.
- When a member of the COE would like to express their thought to the group they will stretch their hand toward the centre of the group and wait for the member that is currently speaking to hand over the 'speaking right' by noting them.
- While a member is speaking the other members must remain quiet.
- Sufficient time will be given to you to think about questions or engage with resources made available during the COE.
- At no point may one person take control or dominate the discussion.
- Any member at any point in the COE is welcome to excuse themselves by silence or exiting the circle.

To also make sure that everyone gets a chance to respond please don't try not to select the same person when other people have also want to comment.  
Do we have any questions?

### PILOT

Part 1

[R] What is a classroom?

[S1] A space where learners learn [why do you say this] we learn here [is that all you do in here]

[S2] A classroom is basically a space where kids are taught things and there is lots of different kids and there is a teacher.

[R] is there anything else that anyone would like to add.... Ok who does the class belong to?

[S3] Teachers

[S4] Teacher

[S5] School

[S6] principal

.... Department

[S7] learners

[S8] Yoah [do you agree?] Sir the classroom also belongs to the learners [ what do you think]..

Part 2

[R] What I am going to do know is show you a couple of classrooms which we will then discuss

(R Show the learners the images repeatedly)

[S1] That one looks like a court

[S2]

[R] Which photo did you like and why?

[S1] the one that had pillows [why] it has space and the windows are cool  
 [S2] the last one, because it has space for us to learn not to be crowded  
 [S3] I like the design (what about the design) the windows (just the windows) and the pillows and there is no tables that's what I like.  
 [S4] I like this classroom because it has a lot of space and you feel free cause its comfy and you enjoy that area  
 [S5] I like the other one (university/ courtroom) cause its very neat [S5... professional]  
 [R] is there anyone else who would like to comment on a picture we have not selected or say something about the images we have selected?

[R] The next question: which one did you like the least or you didn't like?  
 [S1] I didn't like the Lapper, cause it don't understand I'm not sure why, but I would not prefer it as my classroom.... There are no windows; it's not covered when it rains  
 [S2] it doesn't have shelter no windows no doors  
 [S3] Fruit, ) the colour YOAH (the one with the apples on the wall), yes that's why  
 [S4] the last one ( the lappa) cause it doesn't have a door and where are you going to sit (S6:there are benches on the inside) there are no tables how would you right if it cold what would you write?

[S7] I don't like that one cause it looks like a cage it doesn't have the 'home' feeling that a classroom should have  
 [S8] No classrooms have a home feeling  
 [s8] I also don't like the last one. Because there are no tables the wall is...(it looks like a mine)  
 [S9}... there isn't enough light its very dark, they sitting on plastic the ground is very hard cause it looks like rock or sand  
 [S10]I don't like this one cause of the material they have used for the wall, anything can move (on the wall) no, it's not right. [s] and it can collapse

[R] Is there anything else anyone would like to add...

Class was then divided into groups to design a classroom for 10 minutes

## **COE no. 1**

S1: Sir can we speak in isiZulu, if we can explain... it in English

R: I prefer we speak in English but you can change to isiZulu if you need to so that we understand what you're saying....

R : okay so the first question we will discuss is what is a classroom

S1: A classroom is a class where [ yes] children and other people read [is that all they do?]

S2: A classroom is a space where learners can do anything that they want but without making noise

R: Once you select someone she will decide who the next person is

S3: A classroom is a place where children learn [only children?]

S4 Not only children but also other adults learn

S5: a classroom is where we clean [ clean?] Yes sir we clean this class in the morning and after school

R: Anyone answer is right because it's your own opinion  
S6: where learners learn [do all learners learn?] sometimes ... sir some teachers yes but others we don't learn  
S7: A place where everybody gets education

Is there anyone else ...

S8: we don't respect each other

R: why are you saying that?

Sn: some people steal from each other [steal?] yes sir our pens and stuff

The next question is who does the classroom belong to?

S9: the classroom belongs to the learners and the teacher

Class applauds [why ] sir we agree

R: Is there anything else someone would like to add (pause)

Okay the next question is there anything you would like to change about this classroom

S1: I would like to change the ceiling because it is broken and the tables.

R: What would you like to change about the tables?

S1: The colour (what colour would you want) everybody must choose their own colours (whole class applauds in agreement)

S2: The floor,(why) we clean so hard and the boys make it dirty (the boys don't do the cleaning)

S3: I would like to change the door (why) we want a sliding door, the door is broken.

S4 : I would like to change the door cause the colour is dark and dim

S5 what I would like to do is have all of us have laptops in the class

R: why ?

S2/3 because our bags are heavy and some of us walk far distances to get to school (refers to learners who stay far from school and walk) and our books and bags get damaged

S6: I want our class to have curtains

S7: I want our class to have our photos on the walls

Some classmates: yes/noo S5: you can place you picture not ours

R: lets settle down, have you selected someone...

S8 I want our classroom to just have girls only

R: we could have a section for boys and girls and then the boys clean where they are and the girls do the same (Boys No)

S9: I would like to place and have a fridge

S10: I would like to remove the chalk board because it's old and have a touch screen

S11: I would like us to have heaters when it's cold and fans when its hot (the current coal heater does not work)

S12: we would like cameras in our class so that we can see who is stealing in the class

S13: to have two colours on the wall in the class one for girls and one for boys.

S14: We would also like to fix the desks because they have holes

We would like to change our uniform...

## **COE no. 2**

Learners divided into groups to design classrooms and then presenting their design

and then voting for the best.

10min given for learners to look at images of different classrooms.

---

Learner presentations of classroom space

**Group 1**

G1: good day class...as you can see there is a tv, cupboards, table for the teacher and a laptop and a sliding door and windows. Even if we are writing we want to have a tv and when it's hot we want to have a fridge so we can put our ices

When it's cold we want to have curtain on our windows. So that other children can't see us in the class.

The teacher and we too wants to have tablets or computers ... because our books are heavy. If we have books then we want to have a place to store them here

**Group 2**

As you can see we want a new light that are round not the dim ones. We want a lighter chalk board and a door that is brown that has decorations and tables. Green chairs and red chairs. Our tables can be opened so that you can place your books on the table and it locks.

The green tables are because that's the school colours

**Group 3**

Good morning class im going to present our classroom

We want to have a fridge and cameras so they don't steal our things. The teacher will have a shelf to place books. We want the walls to be light blue. Different colour desks selected by each learner, because people like different colours. We would also like tiles so that it's easy to clean. We also want our pictures around the wall. We also want a touch screen board.

**Group 4**

Over here we have the board. We have lockers so that people don't steal from us. Light colours so that we can see in the class.

**Group 5**

Safety for kids that steal like a private school. Our walls are a South African flag and a ceiling with the school badge. Our chairs will be comfortable like the teachers. Book shelf also cocked so that you can store your books when there is too much.

(To represent our school and country)

When its cold we would d like a heater and wen its hot we would like fan. Different colour tables selected by the children. Our lights we would like to have different colours. We would like people to sit alone so that people can't copy.

---

**COE no. 3**

- Recap on the rules.

Q1) How was the initial classroom:

S1. The initial classroom was old [how] sir the posters, and the walls where old

S2. The initial classroom had a damaged ceiling

S3. The old classroom did not impress me [why]

S4. The old classroom, the walls where in a bad condition

S5. ...and It didn't look good

S6. It looked like it belonged to old people (grannies)

How was learning in the old classroom

S1. It was ok.

S2. It was the same [same, how?]

S3. No, Mnr One could not learn well cause the walls where in a terrible condition  
[how was the condition terrible]

S4. The walls where dirty

How is the new classroom

S1. proposed way forward: sir can a girl select boys and boys select girls so that we all  
speak [how does everyone feel about that?] yes [lets vote].

S2. The new class has nice paint [what do you mean nice]

S3. The class is beautiful but the charts placed on the walls don't impress me.

S4. The new class has wonderful decorations

S5. The classroom is nice and the colour reminds me of my bedroom [so you like the new  
classroom ... everything about it?]

S6. What I don't like are the old classroom rules and the old posters

S7. The pictures of food we also don't like cause it makes us hungry.

What is the one thing in the new class that stands out for you the learner?

S1. I love the decoration black by the door

S2. Paint

S3. I love the musical stickers on the front wall

S4. I love the learners Blog

S5. I love the KO picture (artist)

S6. I like the Mandela quote: (R) what does it say S6 education.... Class claps

S7. I like the image of the boy that says I CAN DO IT (R) why? S7 cause we really can  
do it

S8. I love the flowers

S9. I love the messages ... ok tell us anyone without looking (learner quotes ... if you  
change...) class claps

S10. I also like the quotes by opera and learner recites the quote.

{R} if you read the poem by your peers that is being placed on the wall

R: We have been working together now for 4 weeks what did you enjoy most

S1. S1. The snow ball game

S2. S2. I liked the reading we did with the teacher

S3. I liked how you taught us adverbs and adjectives

S4. When you teach I can understand better than the other teachers

S5. Repeats previous statement

S6. I enjoyed the help you gave us with the maths

S7. I also enjoyed the food you provided

What did you enjoy with the work done in the holidays

S1. I enjoyed the eating ..me too sir

S2. I enjoyed working with you in the class and thank you sir

S3. I enjoyed shopping

S4. I enjoyed painting

How do your friends feel who are not in this particular class:

S7. They are jealous [why] because our class in beautiful and theirs is not

S8. They are unhappy cause they don't like how other classes where not decorated

S9. They wish they could remove us from the classroom and learn here

S10. They feel like the class is childish

S11. They are angry

S12. They are troubled



In the four weeks what happened that you did not like?

S1. The boys where stealing pins

S2. People also stole bread

S3. I've forgotten

S4. The fact that the ladies clean the class alone

S5. What I didn't like is that some people spilled paint on the floor

S6. We didn't paint a lot .... You said we were going to paint but the men did most of it

S7. A learners is busy writing remarks on the learners blog

S8. Stealing images from the learners blog

S9. The boy from another school who stole pins and bread

---

#### COE no. 4

Interview with the new 6B

How is the class you are now in

SA: its beautiful [why] it's clean, it's painted [Is that a good thing or a bad thing] good because I like the paint.

Is there anyone else?

R: I worked with last year's grade 6 to create this classroom.

SB: this class is nicer than all the other classes, [why do you say that] this class is light and the other classes are dark.

R: its different its painted light, its colourful [do you prefer a colourful classroom or one that is not] I prefer a colourful classroom. Who doesn't prefer a colourful classroom (7/46)

The posters in the classroom have you read them?

SC: yes [which ones did you read] the rules , SD:I can do it, SE: positive self-esteem, SF life stages, SG: somizi, Nelson Mandela, SI ,opera Winfery, Mandela [what does it say].... Class applauds

R: When you arrived did the teacher tell you what is happening over there

SJ: No,

R: so you know nothing about the learners' blog ask the teacher about the learner's blog.

If they asked you to learn in this class or a different class what would you say (stay in this one)

Who would want to go to another classroom?

SK I would, cause the teachers there teach well, [no the teachers won't change the space only would change]

Would you prefer all the classrooms to be like this one? SL: YES! Is there anyone who wants to have them stay the way they are? YES! {one learner} SM because they would copy our style let them change the other classes when we leave this classroom.

---

#### **COE 4.2**

R :How does leaving that class feel

SM; I feel bad cause that class was colourful  
S N, It was not easy because that class had become a home for us.

If you had to choose between being in a classroom like this of 6B  
2/31

Why would you prefer this classroom? Its ok like this

Why would the rest of you prefer a class like 6B:

SO:1 we want a class that is colourful like that one.

SP:2 cause that one is colourful, clean and beautiful.

SQ:3 because I had gotten use to that classroom

Learners Blog

Would you like a learner's blog in this classroom?

Who doesn't want a LB 1/31

Why: SR: because people we won't focus on the books SS: last year we still focused on our books

Who says they want a learners blog. Why

SS: It encourages us and motivates us ST: Sir, how do they encourage you, because they are successful and we also want to be successful.

Seating arrangement

U shape and the normal

Who prefers the rows that we have now 1/31

Who prefers the U shape 30/31

Why do you prefer the standard one: SU because the teachers can see us when we are seated like this.

Those who prefer the U why?

SV: because there is a lot of space for teachers and learners to move.

SW: You also see well on the board because now you have short people sitting behind us and they can't see well.

What did you enjoy most learning is the space or making the space:

Who preferred making more: 7: SX:I enjoyed the painting x2, and decorating the classroom,

Who preferred being in the classroom: SZ:2 we spent more time learning

Quotes

Does anyone remember the quotes:

SAA: Nelson Mandela quote

SAB: I can do it

SAC: if you can change a classroom...community

SAD: It's easier to see in 6B now unlike before we changed it

---

### **COE 4.3**

I thought you would take advantage of today as there are teachers that are not present (gone to officiate, SATU meeting)

How is it like being in his classroom now and leaving 6B:

Who would like to be in this kind of classroom: 5

Why would you prefer to be in this kind of a classroom:

Who would like to be in that classroom:23

SAE: Why that classroom is beautiful  
Teachers in that classroom were kind..

Two shades of green ...  
Who would prefer this kind of paint cream  
Who wants the two shades of green all  
SAF Why cause green is the colour of the school

Sitting arrangement  
Rows 1 why its better,  
U shape 29SAG why more spacious, SAH: when we are doing an activity that says  
make groups its easier to make them,

SAI:SIR, will we also paint our classroom like 6B

Learners Blog  
Y:30  
N:0

posters  
Do you remember some of the posters  
SAJ. YES! I can do it

Did you place something on the wall SAK stiletto... the weekend

---

COE 4.4  
How do you feel  
SAL:SAD, because we did not spend enough time in our new class.

Grade 7 which classroom do u want

Current 13 why :SAM: this classroom is much bigger/ neat/ beautiful/  
New 15 why: SAN: love the colours because they not too bright, SAO like the  
decorations: pictures, SAP: beautiful colours are bright

Seating  
U :13 SAQ: this one has lots of space to move ,SAR” its more creative  
Rows :15:SAS:sapce to move,

Learners Blog  
Y 29 SAT: makes you feel more comfortable in the classroom,  
N 1 –SAU: someone will swear someone ...

Colour of walls

G; 23 SAW match with school uniforms, SAX: represents the school

Y:8 SAY: there is already too much green in the school

Décor

Current 6 why SAZ: we must try different things and not copy 6B

6B 24 SBA: its beautiful,

If you had the option of redesigning the classroom would you prefer that (all class)

Do you remember some of the quotes on the wall:

1. SA\BB: Change classroom...community